A
'72
F4

RICHARD BAXTER: BISHOP OF NONCONFORMITY

PSYCHOLOGICAL OBSERVATIONS ON THE EARLY LIFE OF RICHARD BAXTER

A Dissertation

Presented to

the Faculty of the School of Theology at Claremont

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Ministry

by

Edmond Blant Ferguson

June 1972

PERMISSION TO COPY
MUST BE OBTAINED
FROM AUTHOR.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

This dissertation, written by

Edmond Blant Ferguson

has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty of the School of Theology at Claremont in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

Faculty Committee

Leland N. Carlson

Allen Graves

June 1, 1972
Date

Dean

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The following dissertation would be incomplete and lacking in its most important component should proper acknowledgment and thanks be omitted to the faculty and student body of the School of Theology at Claremont for making the academic year 1970-71 one of the most memorable experiences of my life.

As the first Navy Chaplain to attend the School of Theology under a Postgraduate Study Program of the United States Navy, my reception at Claremont was certainly not what I had expected. Realizing the current thought and conversation in ecclesiastical circles (especially theological communities) regarding the Vietnam conflict and United States involvement, the prevailing unfavorable attitudes toward the industrial-military complex, and the unpopularity of the military in general, I was prepared to spend the major portion of this year of study engaged in constant debate and discussions with the S.T.C. community as a whole. However, my fears and anxieties were disquieted by the warmth and genuine Christian concern which greeted me on arrival. Thus, I was received into the student body and accepted by all for what I was, i.e., just another seminarian in quest of a knowledge of God, His truth, and personal enrichment.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

A special note of thanks is due Dr. Allen J. Moore for guiding my course of studies while at Claremont, which ultimately led to this dissertation and the accompanying degree. Dr. Moore has also become a good friend and helpful consultant. His patience and understanding will remain a significant part of my memory when the details of some of our more exciting classroom experiences have faded.

I also must acknowledge the deep gratitude I owe to the encouragement of Claremont's notable Puritan spirit and scholar, Dr. Leland H. Carlson. During my stay at Claremont he introduced me to one of the saintliest saints of all, the indomitable and indefatigable Richard Baxter of Kidderminster fame. Dr. Carlson also prepared a letter of introduction in which I was admitted as a reader at the Henry E. Huntington Library in San Marino, California. Under his guided study I was privileged to encounter Baxter in seventeenth century original documents. This experience was the highlight of my year's study. It was here that I was permitted to spend valuable time digesting portions of the Reliquiae Baxterianae, which have become an essential ingredient of this study.

I hope that my efforts to illuminate and interpret several lesser known happenings and experiences of Baxter's early ministry will enable future students to engage in a similar study with a better understanding of this fascinating Puritan pastor and scholar.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS iii

Chapter

I. THE BISHOP OF NONCONFORMITY 1

II. RICHARD BAXTER: BRIEF BIOGRAPHY 12

III. THE VALUE OF PSYCHOLOGY FOR HISTORICAL STUDY. . 38

IV. CRISIS AT BRIDGNORTH 63

V. PSYCHOLOGICAL OBSERVATIONS OF BAXTER'S EARLY LIFE 85

BIBLIOGRAPHY 104

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

CHAPTER I

THE BISHOP OF NONCONFORMITY

The claim of Richard Baxter to a place of fame among the great religious leaders of the Church of England is hardly questioned today. His concern for simple pastoral duties, achievement at Kidderminster, plea for Christian unity and peace, passionate devotional life, prolific writings--all have assisted in spreading Baxter's reputation as being one of the most successful pastors in the history of Protestantism.

The following paper will reveal this aesthetic Christian minister stepping out of the middle of the seventeenth century and appealing to the mind of modern man. There is a uniqueness about Richard Baxter which is both appealing and inspiring. His theology may appear to be outmoded and dated, but it cannot be despised or neglected. "What grips the understanding thinker is the enduring undatedness, the timeless element which will survive all our fleeting modernity."[1]

Baxter lived in an age of great men and significant events. His contemporaries were John Milton, John Bunyan, George Fox in religion; Oliver Cromwell and William Penn

[1]J. M. Lloyd Thomas, "Introductory Essay," in Richard Baxter, Autobiography (New York: Dutton, 1931), p. vii.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

in government; and Hobbes, Newton and Locke in the realm of science and thought--to mention a few.

Into the midst of the intellectual giants came Richard Baxter as teacher and preacher in a "pastoral triumph" at the village church of Kidderminster.[2] If Baxter is, beyond all others, the first teacher of his diocese, then he fully deserves the title given him by his contemporaries, i.e., "Bishop of Nonconformity."[3] He was a teacher of children when he was reader and schoolmaster at Dudley; a teacher of his brethren when he led a group of ministers at Worcester; and, after leaving Kidderminster, he instructed the whole church through his writings. So great was his reputation as a teacher that the name "Baxterianism" was given to the beliefs and doctrines he held.

Eight years after Baxter's death, Mr. Thomas Edwards (1652-1721) bemoaned the influence of his ideas among fellow clergy and laity, saying he was "poisoning the nation with his teachings."[4] It has been said of

[2]An excellent analysis of Baxter's successful ministry at Kidderminster, one which has become a classic model of ministry, is Charles F. Kemp, A Pastoral Triumph (New York: Harper & Row, 1948).

[3]Florence Higham, Faith of Our Fathers (London: S.C.M. Press, 1939), p. 91.

[4]Frederick J. Powicke, Reverend Richard Baxter under the Cross (London: Cape, 1927), p. 142.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

St. Augustine that he spoke in order that it might not be said of him that he remained silent; this is a perfect description of Baxter. He found it most difficult to remain unconcerned or indifferent to the great issues of life. He was a man conscious of a message--and conscious of the little time he had to deliver it.

The principal reason for Baxter's popularity and influence, as seen in his appeal to modern man, is that in him we seem to have all sorts of contradictions joined. J. M. Lloyd Thomas has summarized several of these contradictions in the following manner:

> He is a catholic Puritan as Savonarola was a puritan Catholic; a parliamentarian Royalist who took Cromwell for an ambitious usurper; and thought that Hooker and other defenders of monarchy conceded too much to democracy; a nonconformist Episcopalian who would fain had conscience permitted, have conformed; and intellectualist, but one who, as Calamy says, 'talked in the pulpit with the great freedom about another world, like one that had been there and was come as sort of express from thence to make a report concerning it.'[5]

The major emphasis and thrust of my theological education has been primarily in the areas of Church History and Arts of the Ministry. Therefore, the purpose of this dissertation is to attempt relating these two disciplines in psychological observations of the early life of Richard Baxter. Because of the voluminous historical material available, I have limited purposely the scope of historical

[5]Thomas, op. cit., p. xiii.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

investigation to approximately two years of his life, i.e., 1638-40. This time span covers his ministry at Dudley and Bridgnorth; it also is possibly the most important period during which he formulated for himself an identity and life-style as that befitting a clergyman of the Church of England. Also, it was during this time span that Baxter defected from the ranks of conformity within the Church of England and accepted the tenents of Nonconformity with its accompanying demands for ministry and personal piety. Such a defection occurred within two years after his ordination, and reflects the actions of a very deliberate, carefully considered personal decision.

The most complete account of Baxter's life at Dudley and Bridgnorth is contained in the magnificent Reliquiae Baxterianae,[6] also known as The Autobiography of Richard Baxter. The majority of Baxter's reflections concerning his experiences at Dudley and Bridgnorth have been omitted from the much shorter and abridged Auto-biography for reasons of relevance, space, and interest to the reader. Therefore, for a more complete reading of the total situation one is forced to the origina Reliquiae as well as two later sources, i.e., An Apology for the

[6]Richard Baxter, Reliquiae Baxterianae (London: Printed for Parkhurst, 1696).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Nonconformist Ministry (1681) and A Treatise of Episcopacy (1681).

The methodology employed in the historical investigation of Baxter's unexplained change in attitudes during 1638-40 was to read as many of his original works as possible, especially those works which reflected his thoughts about Nonconformity. Included was a thorough reading of the Reliquiae itself, with special attention given to the years under question, or any reference Baxter made concerning Dudley and Bridgnorth.

This great autobiographical and historical folio was first published in 1696, five years after the death of Baxter, and under the editorship of Mr. Matthew Sylvester. The Reliquiae is a massive and shapeless bulk of material, and to a large measure a dossier of documents, which has never been reprinted. In his will dated 27 July 1689 and proved 23 December 1691, Richard Baxter left all his manuscripts to Matthew Sylvester, with the provision that "he only to print them with the approval of Mr. Lorrimer, Mr. Doelittle, Mr. Morris, or Mr. Williams."[7] Thomas characterizes Sylvester as a "meek, loveable man, of considerable learning and of great ministerial abiliety

[7]Quoted in Thomas, op. cit., p. xxx.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

and piety, . . . His personal devotion to Baxter was profound."[8]

One significant observation uncovered during the course of investigation was the obvious omission by Baxter's principal biographers to any reference concerning the impact of his experiences at Dudley and Bridgnorth on him personally.[9] Neither do they, i.e., his biographers, inquire as to what these experiences meant to him, how they affected him personally, what influences they may have had towards his acceptance of Nonconformity, or his personal response to them. They either completely omit any reference to the problems associated with identity formation, or glibly remark that this was one of the developmental periods of his life, and they hastily make the transition to Kidderminster. They make no attempt at understanding just "why" Baxter defected from the ranks of conformity at this time, rather than at some later date; nor do they raise questions concerning the possibility that he may have been experiencing difficulty with problems

[8] Ibid., p. xxx.

[9] Biographies consulted were those by Frederick J. Powicke, A Life of the Reverend Richard Baxter (London: Cape, 1924); Frederick J. Powicke, Reverend Richard Baxter under the Cross (London: Cape, 1927); Geoffrey F. Nuttall, Richard Baxter (London: Nelson, 1965); Hugh Martin, Puritanism and Richard Baxter (London: S.C.M. Press, 1954); and William Orme, The Life and Times of Richard Baxter (London, 1830).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

associated with personality formation which are characteristic and typical in young persons today.

This is precisely the issue addressed in this paper. It is my contention that hidden within several Baxter documents are sufficient historical data of such import to justify not only psychological observations of portions of his life, but also to reveal significant similarities between Baxter's experience during this period as compared with those of most young persons today who are engaged in a similar struggle. Hopefully, the observations of this paper will substantiate such a conclusion. This young clergyman underwent a traumatic personal experience during this period, one of gigantic proportion.

It is my understanding that Baxter's choice of Nonconformity is directly related to an attempt to formulate for himself an acceptable identity and life-style as that befitting a minister of the Church of England. However, in the events which accompanied such a formation, Baxter became increasingly unhappy with the ministry, as well as certain key theological affirmations of the established church, and thereby chose to cast his lot and ministry with the Nonconformists of his day.

In order to understand the man himself and something of the turbulence of his age, I have extracted highlights of his life from the Reliquiae which are incorporated in the next chapter, entitled: "Richard

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Baxter: Brief Biography." Included in this discussion are portions of his early life and education, the Kidderminster ministry, his ministry as a "Pen in God's Hand," along with certain significant contributions he made to the history of the church. It is impossible to grasp fully the impact of such a personality and intellect apart from the historical developments in England in the 1600's; therefore, while seeking to unfold his story, we shall also be telling the story of a movement within the Church of England.

"The Value of Psychology for Historical Study" is an investigation into the relationship of psychology, particularly psychoanalysis, and history. In the writing of history "how" and "why" are inseparable questions--the same is true in the theory and practice of psychoanalysis. "With both disciplines, the prime quest is for human motives: the historian and the analyst alike seek out the reasons for which individuals and groups did what they did, and in each case, the method of search is itself part of the process of understanding."[10] The connection between the two disciplines seems obvious, but it was only recently that such a recognition has taken place. William L. Langer's presidential address to the American Historical Society in 1957 was an attempt to point out the similarity

[10]H. Stuart Hughes, History as Art and as Science (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), p. 42.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

between the two and encourage future historians to make use of the tools of psychology, especially psychoanalysis, in their investigations.[11]

This discussion will include a review of several of the more obvious contributions which psychoanalysis can make to historical investigation, as well as explain several difficulties surrounding the historians' reluctance to embrace this newly emerging discipline. Focus will then be shifted to Erik Erikson and his popular concept of "identity crisis." It is the opinion of this writer that such psychological tools can enhance the scope of historical investigation, especially biographical history, on the early life of Richard Baxter, whereby the historian can make the subject of his study more understandable to his readers.

Erikson has utilized the tools of psychotherapy most successfully in his "psycho-historical" rewrite of the biographies of two great religious leaders, Luther[12] and Ghandi.[13] These two revolutionary biographies appear as precedents for investigations of this nature. However,

[11]William L. Langer, "The Next Assignment," American Historical Review, LXII (January 1958), 283-304.

[12]Erik H. Erikson, Young Man Luther (New York: Norton, 1958).

[13]Erik H. Erikson, Ghandi's Truth (New York: Norton, 1969).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the approach taken in this dissertation is from the perspective of the historian using psychological tools to enhance and illuminate his study, rather than that of the psychologist writing history. No attempt at a "psycho-historical" treatment of Baxter will be made in this study. The concluding chapter will be restricted to psychological observations of his early life and implications of such study for one's understanding of his life.

The critical historical data which provide much material for the psychological observations are discussed in the chapter entitled, "Crisis at Bridgnorth." The majority of this information was deleted from the Auto-biography and thus has remained hidden to most students of Baxter. The bulk of this material is illuminating, and assists in providing possible answers to some of the "why" questions which surround Baxter's unpopular choice of discharging his duties as a Christian minister along the lines of that of the Nonconformists of his day. Dudley and Bridgnorth are important events and experiences for Baxter, and they greatly influenced the development of his personality. It is the contention of this writer that these experiences were extremely significant to Baxter and deserve more attention and study than has been given them.

The concluding chapter of this dissertation is devoted to relating some of the psychological insights of Erikson to the historical data uncovered in the historical

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

study, as well as to several experiences of his early life. From his own testimony one can readily see how the impact of education, illness, Christian vocation, ecclesiastical and social pressures influenced his life--all of these coming to focus at Bridgnorth. Baxter emerged from these experiences a confessed "Nonconformist," and from extant writings there appears to be sufficient evidence to suggest that during these years of early adulthood he experienced what we know today as an "identity crisis," and he came out of this crisis a better man.

In order that the reader may have a compendium of this genius among English reformers, a brief review of Baxter's life and ministry follows, which is taken from his own Reliquiae.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

CHAPTER II

RICHARD BAXTER: BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

Richard Baxter was born on Sunday, 12 November 1615, at Rowton in Shropshire during the reign of James I.[1] The parish register confirms his own statement that his parents presented him for baptism the following Sunday at High Ercall.[2]

Baxter's father, also Richard, had a "competent estate of a freeholder, free from the temptation of poverty and riches."[3] His father's gambling habits, as well as those of his grandfather, entangled the estate with debts; however, about the time of Richard's birth, the elder Baxter was converted and mended his ways. The neighbors dubbed his father a "puritan" because he read the Holy Scriptures and kept sacred the Sabbath Day.[4] Yet, it should be noted that the elder Baxter never separated himself from the Church of England after his conversion experience as did many persons of his day. Richard recalls

[1]Richard Baxter, Reliquiae Baxterianae (London, 1696), Part I, p. 1.

[2]Geoffrey F. Nuttall, Richard Baxter (London: Nelson, 1965), p. 1.

[3]Baxter, op. cit., I, 1.

[4]Ibid., I, 2.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

that God used his father's conversion as a means of his own personal salvation when he was only fifteen years old.[5]

Baxter's schooling at Rowton during his early years was atrocious. In six years he had four masters, all of them being incompetent and/or ignorant. As "readers" at the chapel two of them preached once a month, the other two never. Also, two were immoral, with the last one drinking himself out of a job.[6]

Baxter was ten years old when Charles I was crowned on 2 February 1626. Shortly thereafter, his family moved to Eaton where the "reader" was over eighty years old and never preached a day in his life. A succession of readers included the present reader's son (a famous stage player); his grandson (unlearned); then a lawyer's clerk (common drunkard); and fourth an imposter with forged orders. These were the men who "taught school and tippled on the weekdays, and whipt the boys when they (i.e., readers) were drunk."[7]

At fifteen, Baxter entered Donnington School, Wroxeter, and there made rapid progress under his own initiative. He desired to enter the university; however, his parents, anxious to keep him near home as he was their only child, sent him instead for private tutoring at Ludlow Castle, which they assured him would be better than the

[5]Ibid., I, 2. [6]Ibid., I, 1. [7]Ibid., I, 2.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

university. His Ludlow studies amounted to having the run of an excellent library, of which he made good use. After eighteen months at Ludlow he returned home, uncertain as to an occupation, though he had entertained thoughts of entering the ministry of the Church of England.[8]

His mother died shortly after his return home, and Baxter remained with his father for some four years, 1634-38. He used this time to engage in further study. His bad health and the lack of a university education made him reluctant to seek ordination; however, he yielded to the persuasion of the Holy Spirit and was ordained by the Bishop of Worcester, who then sent him to teach in a school at Dudley. After approximately one year in this assignment Baxter was moved to Bridgnorth where he became an assistant to the minister. Here he found the people unresponsive to the gospel, and "an applause of the preacher was the most of the success of the sermon which I could hear of, and their tippling and ill company and dead-heartedness quickly drowned all."[9]

The Bridgnorth experience proved to be one of the most formidable periods in his life, for it was here that the imposition of the "etcetera oath" of 1640 made him review carefully certain key doctrines and practices of the Anglican Church. The oath required all ministers to

[8] Ibid., I, 5.

[9] Ibid., I, 15.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

swear that they would "never consent to the alteration of the present government of the Church by archbishops, bishops, deans, archdeacons, etc."[10] The ministers of the surrounding communities met at Bridgnorth to discuss the matter of the oath in order to obtain some unity as to what their response should be. More were against the oath than for it. Baxter said, "This put me upon deeper thoughts of the point of Episcopacy and of the English frame of Church government, than ever I had before; and now I had the opportunity of seeing some books which I never had before."[11] He concluded that though he did not find sufficient evidence to prove all forms of Episcopacy to be unlawful, he did consider the English form to be guilty of corruption at most levels.

This period of preparation perhaps came as a surprise for Baxter as he was one who did not change his opinions easily. Here his sympathies begin moving away from conventional Anglicanism to that of Puritanism. He was shocked by the indiscriminate and promiscuous giving of the Lord's Supper to anyone present in the church. At Bridgnorth, while still an assistant, Baxter said he "never administered the Lord's Supper, nor ever baptised any child with the sign of the cross, nor ever wore the surplice, nor was ever put to appear at any Bishop's

[10] Ibid., I, 15.

[11] Ibid., I, 16.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

court."[12] Thus, the imposition of the "etcetera oath" served to clarify Baxter's thoughts about several matters of concern, and lead him down the path of Nonconformity.

In the middle of 1641 Baxter was invited to become the preacher in the parish church of Kidderminster. He viewed this invitation as from God himself, for "I was brought, by the gracious providence of God, to that place which had the chiefest of my labours and yielded me the greatest fruits of comfort."[13] The Vicar at Kidderminster had been investigated by a Commission of the Long Parliament, which found him to be "utterly insufficient for the ministry . . . unlearned, preached but once a quarter . . . frequented alehouses and had sometimes been drunk; that he turned the table altar-wise, etc., with more such as this."[14]

The Vicar, lest worse befall him than the investigation, agreed with his parishioners that a "lecturer" (preacher) should be appointed, and Baxter was chosen. Actually, he was really their second choice; the first being a much older man, Anthony Lapthorne. The agreement between the Vicar, Reverend Mr. Dance, and the congregation stipulated that the Vicar would retain his place, and his income of £200, but he must allow £60 a year for Baxter's

[12] Ibid., I, 15. [13] Ibid., I, 20. [14] Ibid., I, 20.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

support.[15] While at Kidderminster, Baxter became a preacher of remarkable power with tremendous resourcefulness and stamina. With a break during the Civil War, in which he served in the capacity of a chaplain, he remained at Kidderminster until the Restoration.

When the civil disturbances erupted in 1642, Baxter was compelled by circumstance to leave his pulpit; he had declared his support of Parliament, while the city remained a royalist town. He considered Parliament to represent the religious concerns of the people; yet, he was a royalist at heart. Thus, his decision to support Parliament was qualified and came with many misgivings. "I made no doubt but both parties were to blame . . . and I will not be he that shall justify either of them."[16]

Oliver Cromwell invited Baxter to be the chaplain of his own regiment; Baxter refused and there remained an estrangement between them till Cromwell's death. However, later he became a chaplain under the command of Colonel Whalley. Throughout his ministry as a chaplain, Baxter was disturbed by the growing influence of the Independents and Anabaptists in England. Baxter felt it was his duty as a Christian to counteract it. He was a most unhappy chaplain. Apart from his controversy with Cromwell and his associates in the army, this type of life involved him

[15] Ibid., I, 20.

[16] Ibid., I, 40.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

in hardships which he was not physically able to bear. The result was a serious physical breakdown; his health was very bad, and it was during this period while knocking on death's door, that he wrote one of his most famous books, The Saints' Everlasting Rest (1650).

Health had been a problem most of his life. Baxter says he was hardly ever free from pain. The list of symptoms in the Reliquiae Baxterianae suggests to the reader a host of incurable diseases. He suffered from spitting blood, nosebleed, acute headaches, swollen legs, incessant digestive disorders, each of which is only one small part of the whole story of his personal illness. Prior to ordination, he says he did not expect to live more than one year, yet he was insistent to make good use of the little time God had alloted him to live. "It (i.e., illness) made me study and preach things necessary, and a little stirred up my sluggish heart to speak to sinners with some compassion as a dying man to dying men."[17]

Baxter regarded himself primarily a preacher and pastor. He turned to writing when forbidden to preach following the Restoration. It was during the second period of his ministry at Kidderminster (1650-1660) that Baxter began to be noticed by his fellow clergymen for his outstanding work and ministry. He regarded this

[17] Ibid., I, 21.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

particular period as the most productive and rewarding of his life.

He describes the parish as consisting of above eight hundred families,[18] "an ignorant, rude and revelling people for the greater part, who had need of preaching, and yet had among them a small company of converts, who were humble, godly, and of good conversation."[19] Baxter approached his ministry at Kidderminster with an unusual sense of duty and obligation. He believed the pastor should be a living example of God's redeeming grace, vividly displayed before all men. "The leadership of the flock must be exemplary to the rest; and therefore in this duty as well as in any other. It is not our part only to teach them repentance, but to go before them in the exercise of it ourselves."[20]

His enthusiasm and devotion to the task of shepherding the flock of God were contagious and affected the neighboring ministers. They began meeting regularly in what we would call a "Ministerial Alliance or Ministerial Association." Out of this fellowship came one of his most popular and influential books, The Reformed

[18]Richard Baxter, The Reformed Pastor (London: S.C.M. Press, 1956), p. 19.

[19]Baxter, Reliquiae, I, 20.

[20]Baxter, The Reformed Pastor, p. 15.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Pastor (1656). The occasion for the book's writing grew out of his being invited to speak to the assembled ministers on a "Day of Humiliation" which was proposed to be held on 4 December 1655 as an inauguration of their newly formed association. Illness prevented him from delivering his prepared sermon; thus, he expanded his written text into chapters for a book, which he dedicated to his fellow clergymen. Behind the book itself lay the authority of his work at Kidderminster.

"By 'reformed' in the title Baxter does not mean 'protestant' or 'presbyterian,' but 'quickened.'"[21] His concern was for the declining spiritual condition of his fellow clergymen. "How can we more effectually further a reformation (which we are so much obliged to do) than by endeavouring the reforming of the leaders of the Church."[22] For, "our penitent confession and speedy reformation are the means that must silence the reproaching adversaries."[23]

In summary Baxter laments:

> It is now too common for men to think that the work of the ministry is nothing but to preach well, and to baptize and administer the Lord's Supper, and visit the sick, and by this means people will submit to no more, and too many ministers are negligently or wilfully such strangers to their calling, they will do no more. It hath oft grieved my heart to observe some eminent

[21]Hugh Martin, "Introductory Essay," in ibid., p. 10.

[22]Ibid., p. 16. [23]Ibid., p. 15.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> able preachers, how little they do for the saving of souls, save only in the pulpit.[24]

Baxter viewed preaching as the primary concern for every minister; however, of almost equal import and concern was his deep feeling about pastoral care. In stressing its obligations he never overlooked the difficulties. In The Reformed Pastor, Baxter exhibits a concern for ministers who are failing badly in the oversight of the people of God. He gloried in the pulpit, and never once diminished its importance; yet, he believed firmly that the ministerial office would be ineffective and undermined if the preacher were not also a pastor. Careful planning and preparation is presupposed in such an endeavor, and behind it must be a definite purpose. For Baxter, one such aim and purpose was that of education.

The lesson received from the pulpit must be taken home and discussed. Therefore, it was not uncommon for Puritan pastors to call on select homes during the week and conduct a simplified religious education class. The characteristic Puritan practice was similar to the following: whole family assembled, someone--possibly one of the children--repeated the main points of the previous Sunday's sermon, and the minister would further elaborate on the principal points of doctrines set forth. Baxter employed

[24] Ibid., p. 110.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

this principle, but altered it somewhat for use in his Kidderminster parish. Instead of reflecting on each Sunday's sermon, he designed a program whereby discussion followed the same day the sermon was preached. He writes:

> I preached before the wars twice each Lord's day; but after the war but once, and once every Thursday, besides occasional sermons. Every Thursday evening my neighbors that were most desirous and had opportunity met at my house, where one of them repeated the sermon, and afterwards they proposed what doubts any of them had about the sermon, or any other case of conscience, and I resolved their doubts.[25]

Such meetings began and were held in his home; yet, this did not fully satisfy Baxter. Therefore, he developed an elaborate catechism for his parish, and used this as a means of educating and indoctrinating his parish. The sessions were moved to the church for matters of convenience and utility. Baxter gave himself the remainder of the week to instructing those who were not so concerned about the uses and means of grace. "We (i.e., Baxter and his assistant) spend Monday and Tuesday from morning to almost night in the work, taking about fifteen or sixteen families in a week, that we may go through the parish, which hath above eight hundred families, in a year . . . And I find more outward signs with most that come, than of all my public preaching to them."[26] Baxter encouraged his

[25]Baxter, Reliquiae, I, 16.

[26]Baxter, The Reformed Pastor, p. 19.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

fellow pastors to adopt a similar catechetical approach in their parishes in hopes of evangelizing all of the church.

He also felt that each member of the family should be afforded an opportunity of speaking with the pastor in private because some persons were afraid of making mistakes, and were embarrassed when doing so in front of the family with the pastor present. There are those parishioners who need special attention--for this reason Baxter insisted on providing them with an opportunity to speak with him in private in a counseling session. Needless to say, these sessions did not possess the psychological sophistication of contemporary counseling, nor did he wait for persons to seek him out. However, they worked for him with considerable success.

In addition, Baxter deplored the fact that his fellow clergy were not concerned with the scriptural injunction of "discipline" among their flock and were neglecting to provide the required ministry for spiritual growth and virtuous living. In his day people belonged to the established church because they were members of the community. He was apprehensive of offering the Lord's Supper to an individual whose life reflected nothing of the work of grace. Baxter felt there was something very distinctive about being a Christian. In the Reliquiae he notes,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> Six or seven young men did join with us, who were addicted to tippling, and one of them was a weakheaded fellow who was a common drunkard . . . We admonished him again and again, and laboured to bring him to contrition and resolution, and he would still confess it and still go on . . . At last I declared him unfit for the Church's communion, and required them to avoid him . . . Call it excommunication or not.[27]

Regarding this incident, he proceeds to disclose how on one occasion this fellow actually sought to kill him for his actions, but was refrained by circumstances from doing so.

The "rabble" resented his strictness and charged he lacked sympathetic understanding. Baxter was even caricatured in effigy at the annual town fair. Such confrontation was difficult for Baxter; "I think it is an easier matter by far, to compose and preach a good sermon, than to deal rightly with an ignorant man for his instruction in the necessary principles of religion."[28] Baxter was extremely sensitive about this touchy subject; he felt there was a great need for the universal acceptance and application of ecclesiastical discipline. Much of the blame for the breakdown of church discipline must be placed at the feet of the clergy who refused to make distinctions between sinners and saints. "And what a great dishonour to Christ it is when the Church shall be

[27]Baxter, Reliquiae, I, 91.

[28]Baxter, The Reformed Pastor, p. 118.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

as vicious as pagan and Mahometan assemblies and shall differ from them only in ceremony and name."[29]

Baxter's ministry at Kidderminster began to wane when on 1 May 1660 the Parliament voted to recall Charles II; and on 29 May the King entered London amid great rejoicing. Baxter had been working for such a Restoration for several years, and played a small role in the King's recall. During the previous year, when few men saw any probability of the king's return, Baxter published a book entitled The Holy Commonwealth in which he argued that even the British Commonwealth should be turned into a Holy Commonwealth, and in general the civil state should be identical with the church, the visible City of God.

When such a dramatic switch in Baxter's thought occurred is unknown; what was significant about his position was that he had returned to the fold of the royalist. The day before Parliament voted the recall, he preached "A Sermon of Repentance" at St. Margaret's, Westminister; on 10 May he followed with a sermon delivered before the Lord Mayor in St. Paul's Cathedral, which was published as Right Rejoicing. In the first sermon he mentioned that he and Archbishop Ussher in less than a half hour's debate had agreed on the form of church government which was scriptural; in the second sermon he

[29]Baxter, Reliquiae, I, 130.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

thanked God that the restoration of the monarchy was being accomplished with little blood being shed. On 25 June Baxter was appointed a Chaplain to the King. A month later on 22 July he preached before the King and published his sermon as The Life of Faith by royal command.[30]

At first Baxter did not see the changing times. Little did he realize this would be his last sermon before the king, nor did he foresee not returning to Kidderminster. The first step of ecclesiastical change was on 13 September with the passing of the Act of Conforming and Restoration. This Act was aimed at restoring every clergyman ejected under the Commonwealth, if the clergyman claimed reinduction. Shortly thereafter, the King's Chaplains met with him in audience where Baxter earnestly begged the king's help in establishing Christian unity. Charles replied that he felt the parties could meet midway and that he would draw them together. This appeared an excellent opportunity such as had not been since the Reformation for Episcopalians and Presbyterians to examine their differences and attempt to discover some manner of agreement.[31]

However, Baxter could not keep silent concerning his disapproval of the king's initial declaration which would allow freedom of worship. He feared this would lead

[30] Ibid., II, 216-30. [31] Ibid., II, 230ff.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

to further schism and encourage Independents to separate themselves from the Anglican fellowship. His outspoken opposition to the proposal annoyed the king and perhaps discouraged him from pressing for a settlement. The negotiations came to a standstill. Then one day he saw a new document from the king which set out some "just and reasonable proposals" which excited him to no end, for it went far to meet the moderate Presbyterian position and offered a hopeful basis for discussion.[32]

The same day Baxter received an offer from the Lord Chancellor to become Bishop of Hereford. Encouraged by the new Declaration, plus his own desire to devote himself to writing, he gave the offer serious consideration before declining it partly on personal and partly on ecclesiastical grounds.[33]

In March 1661 a Royal Commission was appointed, containing representatives of the bishops and the Presbyterians to meet in "the Master's Lodging in the Savoy."[34] They were instructed to consult regarding the Book of Common Prayer and by agreement to make any alterations necessary to afford satisfaction to wounded clergymen and restore unity to the Church. Things could not have been worse for the Presbyterians and Baxter. When the

[32] Ibid., II, 279ff.

[33] Ibid., II, 298.

[34] Ibid., II, 303ff.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Commission met, the bishops were reluctant to discuss any proposition with the Presbyterians, and requested that they instead present their proposals in writing. They had been "outmanoeuvered."[35] Nothing came from the exchange of papers or from a set debate. "The final touch of futility and bad faith was provided by the passing of the Bill of Uniformity through the House of Commons before the Savoy Conference had even completed its discussions: an odd way to treat a royal commission."[36] Baxter, commenting on the Savoy Conference, said he had never been more unprepared for anything in his life--the conference saw him at his worst. The Act of Conformity was passed on 19 May 1662 and the date for the ejection of the clergy not episcopally ordained, and unable to give full endorsement to everything in the Book of Common Prayer, was set for 24 August 1662.

Baxter possessed episcopal ordination, and did not oppose the Book of Common Prayer in principle. But, to a Church established on terms intended to exclude, he could not conform. The "mere Catholick" could not be other than a Nonconformist. He did not wait for the 24 August deadline to expire; instead, he preached a farewell sermon

[35]Hugh Martin, Puritanism and Richard Baxter (London: S.C.M. Press, 1954), p. 51.

[36]Ibid., p. 52.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

only six days later on 25 May 1662. "When Bartholomew Day came, about one thousand eight hundred or two thousand ministers were silenced and cast out . . . "[37] This purge in 1662 was on purely religious grounds, and it took place all at once. About one in five of the clergy were ejected; no such drastic purge had ever taken place in England.

For twenty years he and his fellow ministers were to be outlaws, spied upon, hunted by informers, persecuted by harsh magistrates, fined, and imprisoned--just because they refused to sign the Act of Conformity. They were labeled "Nonconformists."

The Act of Uniformity had rendered dissenting ministers liable to three months in jail if they preached, but the Act did not mention the laity. However, in 1664 the Conventicle Act was passed which forbade any gathering of five or more persons for religious worship in any manner that was not allowed in the liturgy. Then came the Five Mile Act in 1665 which restrained Nonconformist ministers from coming within five miles of any town, or place, where he has been employed as a minister or teacher. Since many ministers who refused to sign the Act of Uniformity had turned to teaching as a profession, this threatened them and their families with starvation. It was also a blow to popular education. Baxter said many of

[37]Baxter, Reliquiae, II, 384ff.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

them were forced to "beggary and famine for themselves and their families."[38] It must be recognized that "in fairness, we ought not to forget the expulsion in 1646 of troublesome students and teachers for five miles from the universities, or that Cromwell in 1665 had forbidden ejected teachers to teach."[39]

In 1672 Charles issued a Declaration of Indulgence, suspending the operation of the laws against Nonconformity and providing that dissenting ministers might be licensed to preach. On 27 October a license was issued for Richard Baxter to preach, and he said, "The 19th of Novemb. (my baptism-day) was the first day after ten years silence that I preached in a tolerated public assembly (though not yet tolerated in any consecrated church), but only (against law) in my own house."[40]

Baxter's own persecutions continued intermittently until his death and makes for sad reading to see the indignities endured by so frail a man--to say nothing that his only crime was preaching a moderate Puritan sermon whenever he had an opportunity. In 1685, at the age of seventy, he was imprisoned for a second time by an angered judge over a statement in his Paraphrase of the New

[38] Ibid., III, 1.

[39] Martin, Puritanism, p. 57.

[40] Baxter, Reliquiae, III, 103.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Testament. He spent the next year and a half in the Tower, and believed he would have remained there till his death had not the new king ordered the five hundred mark fine to be removed. In February 1685, James II succeeded to the throne of England on the death of his brother, Charles.

James issued a Declaration of Indulgence on 1 April 1687 which gave freedom of worship to Protestant dissenters as well as Roman Catholics, and suspended all laws that barred them from holding public office. Again, the prisons discharged their inmates and congregations openly resumed worship. The Nonconformists were in a dilemma. They wanted the freedom offered them by the king, but they also realized James was seeking indulgence for the Roman Catholics and was using them as a means to an end. Then came the Act of Toleration (1689) in which Nonconformist ministers were given freedom if they subscribed to thirty-four of the Thirty-Nine Articles. Baxter was afforded the opportunity to resume preaching and he lived long enough to see some future for worship according to conscience free from ecclesiastical interference.

When the doors to preaching had been closed and bolted for Baxter in 1662, he turned to writing as the main service to be rendered to the Christian community. At both Acton and Totteridge, he utilized every waking hour to study, reading, and writing. He loved to read church history, especially the early fathers and the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

scholastics; his writings are filled with a wide range of footnotes. This was also the century of great literary achievements. Among the most noteworthy were George Herbert, John Milton, Lancelot Andrewes, George Fox, Jeremy Taylor, and John Bunyan. Baxter stands in the forefront of the many theological and devotional writers of his day, and no one person was more influential on the lives of his readers than he. "As a writer of viril seventeenth-century prose he can contribute passages to stand beside the writings of any of them."[41] If Baxter had a literary fault worth criticism, it was his refusal to rewrite any script. His approach was to get the material on the paper as rapidly as possible. He found no time to proof-read his manuscripts and sent them off to the publishers as soon as he would finish a section of work.

Baxter is credited with writing one hundred sixty-eight books. The Reverend A. G. Matthew's bibliography maintains he published no more than one hundred forty-one volumes and contributed to forty additional ones, while there is still much in unpublished manuscripts in Dr. Williams' library.[42] His Call to the Unconverted

[41]Herbert Wallace Schneider, The Puritan Mind (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1958), p. 27.

[42]A. G. Matthews, "The Works of Richard Baxter: An Annotated List" in Nuttall, op. cit., pp. 132-136.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

(1659) provided the guidelines for organization of New England society as it should be. He observes, "When Baxter's treatise was imported into New England, it was immediately recognized as a complete exposition of what New England professed to be, and it merely remained for the clergy to expound and celebrate the grand doctrine."[43] For Baxter, writing was a Christian vocation, a way of preaching the gospel, and for many years the only method of communication open to him. His works reflect a high degree of scholarly thought and clarity. When Johnson was asked by Boswell which of Baxter's books were worth reading, the Doctor replied, "Read any of them. They are all good."[44] During his last illness when having been praised for his writing ability by a friend, Baxter replied, "I was but a Pen in God's hand, and what praise is due to a Pen?"[45]

Baxter's concern for unity of the church has led Horton Davies to call him "the first exponent of Ecumenism in England."[46] Baxter was exceeding moved against any form of separation or disunity in the church and wrote

[43]Schneider, The Puritan Mind, p. 27.

[44]Martin, Puritanism, p. 125.

[45]Quoted in Nuttall, op. cit., p. 131.

[46]Horton Davies, The English Free Churches (London: Oxford University Press, 1952), p. 79.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

extensively against it. He rejected such practices because they were contrary to the principle of love, because they were pernicious, and because they plainly proceeded from the same spirit that persecution did. "For though their expressions be various, their minds and principles are much the same . . ."[47]

In 1652 Baxter invited the ministers in nearby parishes to meet with him at his home in Kidderminster for fellowship. With their encouragement he prepared a form of agreement, to contain "so much of the Church Order and Discipline, as the Episcopal, Presbyterian and Independent are agreed in, as belonging to the Pastors of each particular Church."[48] The agreement was accepted later by less than half of the one hundred twelve parishes in Worcestershire with the majority of those voting in favor of the association from the central, non-party parishes. The only Presbyterian minister in the county did not join, nor did the Independents, though several of them were receptive to this new idea. With the breakdown of the diocesan machinery during the Commonwealth, some such organization was desirable. One writer regards this movement as "an experiment towards a new church order for

[47]Richard Baxter, An Apology for the Nonconformist Ministry (London: 1681), p. 8.

[48]Baxter, The Reformed Pastor, p. 123.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

England, which did not have time to establish itself before Cromwell."[49] This agreement was published in 1653 with an explanation and defense of the propositions in a book entitled Christian Concord. The tone of Baxter's passionate plea for church unity is evident in most of his writings. He called for a radical form of Catholicism against all sects, one not merely Roman or Greek or Anglican, but Christian--therefore truly Universal. He saw, as one born out of due time, this vision of a Church whose limits are coterminous only with Christianity itself. He writes,

> Christianity is our religion. Protesting against Popery is our negation . . . Christianity is it that we are agreed in, and that is our religion, and nothing but that. Protestancy as such is but our wiping off the dirt . . . We shall profess before men and angels that we own no religion but the Christian religion, nor any church but the Christian church, nor dream of any Catholic Church, but one, containing all the true Christians in the world, united in Jesus Christ as the head.[50]

Regular meetings were arranged on a monthly basis and were open to all ministers. The meetings were usually begun with a sermon, then an open discussion followed concerning questions fellow clergy had with the theology, worship, or discipline. They agreed to act as a court of

[49]Hugh Martin, "Appendix" in Baxter, The Reformed Pastor, p. 123.

[50]Richard Baxter, Key For Catholicks (London: 1659), Preface, p. 6.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

appeals regarding complaints leveled at one of their members, and they furthermore agreed not to receive into their individual churches anyone excluded from membership in any of the churches of the association. He believed most of the blame for the prejudice and schism within the church of his day should be laid at the feet of the clergy. He lamented, "I am deeply sensible of the sinfulness of those prelates and pastors of the churches who are the principal causes of these divisions . . . The contentions between the Greek Church and the Roman, the Papist and the Protestants, the Lutherans and the Calvinists, have woefully hindered the kingdom of Christ."[51]

Only through returning to the ancient faith would there ever be unity of the visible church, and a reformation of its people. Baxter believed that man contributed to the schisms within the church when he insisted on unity of doctrine and belief before cooperation and fellowship were possible. He asks,

> Is the distance so great that Presbyterian, Episcopal, and Independent might not be well agreed? When we once return to the ancient simplicity of faith, then, and not till then, shall we return to the ancient love and peace. I would therefore recommend to all my brethren, as the most necessary thing to the Church's peace, that they unite in necessary truths, and . . . do not make a larger creed and more necessaries than God hath done.[52]

[51]Baxter, Reliquiae, III, 132.

[52]Baxter, The Reformed Pastor, p. 101.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Baxter died as he lived, a moderate Episcopalian. Though often the spokesman for the Presbyterians, he was, for all that some historians and others say, never a Presbyterian. Because of his successful model of shepherding at Kidderminster, his voluminous writings, and loving concern for the church of God--Baxter will be remembered. But, it is the judgment of this writer that he is one of the most vital and significant witnesses of his own age to ours. It is regrettable that he has not come into his own as yet, though there were signs that in the 1920's he would; hopefully, during the coming decades a renewed interest in this creative and compassionate reformed pastor will come about.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

CHAPTER III

THE VALUE OF PSYCHOLOGY FOR HISTORICAL STUDY

It is generally agreed that history is a most conservative discipline, one slow to reflect recent advances or intellectual developments--this possibly because its practitioners are always having to think about the past. However, it must be acknowledged that in spite of this conservative attitude history also possesses a persistent eclecticism, whereby intellectual developments do eventually get reflected, and even embodied, in historical thought.

With varying degrees of comprehension, Americans have quite readily absorbed into their own speech such terms as image, projection, complex, neurosis, identity crisis, psychological conflicts, and insecure anti-hero. Also, there is an increasing number of persons today who have had some personal experience with psychology and/or psychoanalysis, so that the language of these disciplines has become an essential component of their vocabulary. And, there is a growing trend to use psychology as a tool of historical analysis and thereby place the individual back nearer the center of history. The results of such an endeavor have been favorable for the most part, and one

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

can hope that psychology will be more fully exploited by historians in the future.

Unfortunately, for most of us there is little that is elementary about the mechanics and workings of psychoanalysis. The theories and techniques are sophisticated, complicated, and often tedious, which poses major difficulties to our acceptance of them. For they touch us in a most sensitive area--ourselves. Also, they appeal to a whole mass of clinical evidence that is so familiar to us that familiarity has bred not an overt contempt for psychology, but dismissal. Add to this the claim that psychoanalysis is a science and it is no wonder that historians share the general attitude that there is little that is elementary about psychological systems. Mazlish bemoans,

> Why should history, the one discipline that deals especially with man's past and seeks explanations of that past largely in terms of men's motives, ignore so staunchly the one science (or, at least, attempt at a science) which centers itself on research into exactly these areas. Historians study man's collective past; psychoanalysts study his individual past. Surely, one would have thought that a mental bridge could be built to connect the two investigations.[1]

Yet, it remained for Freud to make the first gesture toward building a bridge for the gap, and bringing about the confluence of history and psychology. With the

[1]Bruce Mazlish (ed.), Psychoanalysis and History (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1963), p. 2.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

publication of The Interpretation of Dreams in 1900, Freud enunciated his theories on the dynamics of the human mind. The theory of dynamic psychology which he built concentrates on the patterns and permutations of psychic energy. He was able to go beyond the psychology of his time, which was preoccupied with discovering how the human mind and nervous system operated, to give explanation of why specific people behaved as they did in specific instances, regardless of what they thought or said they were doing.[2]

In 1913, Albert Schweitzer presented to the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Strasburg his doctoral thesis, entitled The Psychiatric Study of Jesus.[3] This work of Schweitzer was to be typical of the many psychoanalytic studies published in the following years, in the sense that most of these studies were by European, medical doctors mainly, with little or no formal training in history, who dashed off interpretive sketches of well-known historical personalities. Schweitzer, of course, had theological as well as medical interests in mind. One of the few historians to participate in this early Freudian festival was the American expert on the Protestant

[2]For an excellent introduction into the person, work, and bibliography of Sigmund Freud and "Neo-Freudianism," see Daniel Yankelovich and William Barrett, Ego and Instinct (New York: Random House, 1970).

[3]Albert Schweitzer, The Psychiatric Study of Jesus (Boston: Beacon Press, 1948).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Reformation, Preserved Smith, who produced a study of Martin Luther in 1913 that explained many of Luther's utterances and actions in terms of an Oedipus complex.[4]

In the years following World War I, an insatiable reading public devoured a great outpouring of biographical writing--much of it not directly influenced by Freud.[5] Psychologists were able to present to the learned world a wider range of commonly accepted fundamentals than they had previously.

The founders and leading practitioners of the history of ideas in the first third of the present century were Germans, and it was this kind of history that the forced émigrés of the 1930's brought across the Atlantic, to the great benefit of American scholarship.[6] The year 1940 marked not only the granting of Harvard's first Ph.D. in American Civilization, but also marked the initial publication of The Journal of the History of Ideas. The historian was no longer interested simply in what a man

[4]Preserved Smith, "Luther's Early Development in the Light of Psychoanalysis," American Journal of Psychology, XXIV (1913), 360-77.

[5]For an appreciation, quantitive as well as qualitative, of this outpouring, see the very illuminating book, John A. Garraty, The Nature of Biography (New York: Knopf, 1955).

[6]For an excellent analysis of the historian's utilization of psychology in his investigations, see Frank E. Manuel, "The Use and Abuse of Psychology in History," Daedalus (Summer 1970), 187-213.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

said about a subject, but how he said it and what his sources were, why he said it as he did, what he really meant to say, etc. The growth of intellectual history is part of the reason for the extraordinary flowering of psychological explanations in history from about 1950 on.

Hughes believes the connections between history and psychology are too obvious to be looked over or ignored. He regrets the fact that a betrothal of these two disciplines has only recently been announced. His question is, "Why have historians and analysts taken so long to see what they have in common?"[7]

It was William L. Langer, president of the American Historical Association in 1957, who tossed in the gauntlet and issued such a challenge to historians. In his now famous presidential address to the association, Langer assigned to historians the task of integrating psychology into their investigations. He remarked, "I refer more specifically to the urgently needed deepening of our historical understanding through exploitation of the concepts and findings of modern psychology."[8] His concern was not for the utilization of academic or

[7]H. Stuart Hughes, History as Art and as Science (New York: Harper & Row, 1964).

[8]William L. Langer, "The Next Assignment," American Historical Review, LXII (January 1958), 284. Also reprinted in its entirety in Mazlish, op. cit.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

classical psychology, but rather to psychoanalysis and its later developments and variations which are included in dynamic or depth psychology.[9] He also noted that the basic concepts of psychoanalysis, such as the process of repression, identification, etc., have been firmly established today and are a vital part of our thinking.

Langer suggests that the scope of historical study has undergone vast extension in recent years and that, while the limits of this extension had not yet been reached, they were clearly not far off. He concluded that the future of history rested more likely with intensive study, rather than with extensive study. Specifically, this more intensive study was to be made by exploiting the concepts and findings of modern psychology, particularly dynamic or depth psychology. He made a significant reference to the contribution of the so-called "Neo-Freudians," who "advancing beyond the narrowly environmental factors, have done much to develop the significance of constitutional and cultural influences."[10]

The similarities and parallels which exist between history and psychoanalysis are concisely drawn by H. Stuart Hughes in his slim but significant volume called History as Art and as Science.[11] He maintains that "for the

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid., p. 287.

[11] Hughes, op. cit., pp. 42-67.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

historian as for the psychoanalyst an interpretation ranks as satisfactory not by passing some formal scientific test but by conveying an inner conviction. For both, plural explanations are second nature."[12] In certain significant senses, psychoanalysis is history and history is psychoanalysis. Historians and psychoanalysts share the professional and moral goal of liberating man from the burden of the past by helping him to discover and understand the past. Each practitioner is alert to the symptomatic importance of the apparently trivial. These two disciplines, in Hughes' opinion, "share the conviction that everything is both relevant and random, incoherent and ordered, in the all-inclusive context of a human existence."[13]

Psychoanalysts and historians attempt to profit from individual and collective experience, and they often do. But their goal is not the formulation of universally acceptable scientific laws. For all their expertise, historians and psychoanalysts are concerned with the unique, with the identification and explanation of what is unusual. Historians and psychoanalysts cannot predict what will happen or, given a set of past conditions, demonstrate scientifically what would have happened. Only when they are given the conditions and results of a

[12] Ibid., p. 47.

[13] Ibid., p. 48.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

situation can they perhaps show how cause and effect were related.

But why the delay? Why have historians and analysts taken so long in seeking what they have in common, and discovering how each can complement the other? Hughes lists several explanations worth our attention. The first, he says, "lies in the one-sided character of the two 'revolutions' in historical writing that have produced our contemporary attitude toward our own craft--the creation of modern historical study in Germany by the school of Ranke, and its neoidealist restatement a century later at the hands of Dilthey and Croce."[14] Because of this development, the most sensitive minds among European historians saw no reason to concern themselves with experimental or clinical psychology. In brief, they retreated to a bald assertion that 'the spirit' alone held the key to historical understanding."[15] By spirit he means the subjective aspect of human behavior; in that usage there is nothing about the German word "Geist" to quibble about. Yet among the idealist school of historians "Geist" has surrounded itself with an aura of lofty abstractions which has both alienated the scientists and obscured the work of historians and history.[16]

[14] Ibid., p. 43.

[15] Ibid., p. 44.

[16] Ibid., p. 45.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

A second reason why historians have been reluctant to embrace psychoanalysis emerges from the manner in which Freudian psychology has come into being. Hughes maintains that the way in which Freud approached his labors is a contributive factor in the long delayed alliance between these two disciplines--i.e., his attitude was rooted in the scientific positivism of the late nineteenth century. Thus, to the end of his life Freud's "basic vocabulary of explanation remained mechanistic."[17] While Freud initially manifested little interest in history, so the historians were scorning the claims of natural science. The misunderstandings between the two were inevitable and mutual. "The historians knew science only in its nineteenth-century guise, and could find little relevance for their own studies in an external and formalistic psychology."[18] At the same time psychoanalysts thought of history as a dry search for "facts" which could never explain anything really important. Therefore, the two disciplines went their separate ways with little regard for the existence or intellectual advancements of the other.

Another barrier which needs to be overcome before the historian is willing to adapt the techniques of psychology to his work is the mistaken notion that one has to absorb all of the highly controversial theory (i.e.,

[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid., p. 46.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

psychoanalysis) and then apply it slavishly to one's material. While one's 'feel' for the use of a psychological tool is improved with deeper understanding of the theoretical structure on which it is based, it is by no means essential to embrace all of any one school of psychology in order to make psychological innovations in approach to historical study. This does not diminish the fact that anyone working in the field of history, whether with an individual or with group behavior, must learn not only his own historical discipline but the very involved theory and data of psychoanalysis if he is attempting to make use of any one of its insights. For, as Mazlish has pointed out, "it is lal too easy to make crude, misguided, 'analogies'; and parlor-room Freudian analysis, like hypnotic stunts in an earlier day, can bring discredit to legitimate investigations."[19]

Hughes believes the young Ph.D. candidate interested in psychological aspects of historical training should be exposed to some variety of psychoanalytic training in order to "stimulate the release of historical study from its bondage to libraries and documents."[20] He believes a full course in psychoanalysis would be too long and expensive, and some students would be temperamentally

[19]Mazlish, op. cit., p. 14.

[20]Hughes, op. cit., p. 65.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

unsuited for it. However, he does contend that some form of field work is necessary to equip the historian with psychoanalytic tools for his investigation. He does not see this as a substitute for self-education--the gradual growth in personal awareness--which is the historian's own lonely task. "Psychoanalysis can contribute mightily to this process; it cannot take over the assignment entirely."[21]

Add to these difficulties the crucial issues related to the application of psychoanalytic methods to "patients" who are dead and no longer subject to verification by clinical processes, and whose "analysis" must proceed in terms of a one-way Socratic dialogue with their remaining documents, and it is much clearer why the historian has been reluctant to undertake such a project as linking his discipline with that of the analyst.

In spite of these difficulties, there are several areas in which the psychoanalytic techniques and theories can and have provided invaluable assistance to the historian. A few of the more noteworthy areas will be described briefly.

The first contribution, and possibly the most important, comes in the form of a challenge. Psychoanalysis trumpets to the historian, "Interpret the

[21] Ibid.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Documents." It says to him, you cannot simply pass over or ignore the "facts" presented to you in the evidence under consideration. If the historian, like Ranke, really wants to know how it actually happened, then he must learn to ask the right questions of the existing documents. This will lead the historian to seek new documents which previously he has ignored or thought to have little or no significance. On the other hand, the historian should remember not to ask too much of the documents. As E. H. Carr has reminded us, "no document can tell us more than what the author of the document thought--what he thought had happened, what he thought ought to happen or would happen, or perhaps only what he wanted others to think he thought, or even only what he himself thought he thought."[22]

Erikson maintains in the chapter, "The Meaning of 'Meaning It'" in Young Man Luther that the historical figure must be understood as meaning what he says not only in the overt and obvious content of his words, but at a much deeper, more latent level of psychoanalytical meaning.[23] Thus, perhaps the most important contribution psychoanalysis can provide is to insist that the historian

[22]Quoted in ibid., p. 91.

[23]Erik H. Erikson, Young Man Luther (New York: Norton, 1958), p. 210.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

pay critical, i.e., analytic, attention to the documents and to what the voices talking through the documents really mean.[24]

One place where history has notably failed is in its explanation of the "irrational." Hughes argues that in Ranke's mind the cruelty and incoherence of the past were sublimated into the wonderment at the infinite variety of God's creation; he could recognize the irrational, but he did not know what to do with it. Thus,

> They could subsume it under the love of God; they could quake in holy terror before an inexplicable force whose echoes, muffled by dutiful lives of scholarship, resounded within their own breasts, . . . But they were unable to unfold it in the sympathetic understanding which they thought of as their supreme professional skill; they found it impossible to embrace the precise contours of behavior and emotion which remained foreign to them.[25]

In addition, historians of all schools have had difficulty when dealing with contradictions. The gap between a word and a deed, the emotional atmosphere which surrounds overt acts of allegiance, careless phrases and gestures which betray an unrecognized intention. Such contradictions usually leave the historian at a loss. This observation is compounded by the scholar's tendency to accept the message of official documents at their face value. But when it comes to the great men of history, the

[24]Mazlish, op. cit., p. 16.

[25]Hughes, op. cit., p. 50.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

prime movers, historians have been reluctant to recognize the simultaneous presence of motives that seem to be in radical opposition. Erikson complained "historical dialectics refuses to acknowledge the principle that a great revolutionary's psyche may also harbor a great reactionary; but psychological dialectics must assume it to be possible, and even probable."[26] Hughes maintains that if the historian comes "to recognize that an unconscious or half-conscious motive can alone bring into a clear pattern the pieces of a hopelessly jumbled puzzle, the historian has reached the threshold of a psychoanalytic interpretation, whether he knows it or not . . . Our goal as historians is not always to assign a motive . . ."[27]

Today, historical scholarship has begun to establish firm ties with such neighboring intellectual disciplines as economics, sociology, politics, and psychology. The result of such discussion and dialogue indicates that the arts and sciences are not as far apart as they used to suppose.[28] One historian has observed, "Scientists, social scientists, and historians are all engaged in different branches of the same study; the study of man and his

[26]Erikson, op. cit., p. 231.

[27]Hughes, op. cit., p. 52.

[28]H. Stuart Hughes, "The Historian and the Social Scientist," American Historical Review, LXVI (October 1960), 20-46.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

environment, of the effects of man on his environment and of his environment on man. The object of the study is the same: to increase man's understanding of, and mastery over, his environment."[29]

Psychoanalysis has produced many helpful tools and insights which are extremely beneficial in historical investigation. To illustrate this point I have chosen to lift from psychoanalysis one very popular and significant concept for examination, i.e., Erikson's "crisis of identity." No attempt will be made to critically examine his methodology.[30] Rather, an inquiry into his unusual and unique use of the term itself will be attempted, and some observations as to its value in historical investigation.

The reasons for choosing Erikson's concept of identity to illustrate the value of psychology for historical study are many, not the least of which is the fact that there are so many obvious similarities between Erikson's criteria involved in identity formation and the events which were occurring in Baxter's life at approximately the same age, though some three hundred and forty

[29]E. H. Carr, What Is History? (New York: Knopf, 1961), p. 111.

[30]Erikson has detailed his "psycho-historical" methodology in an excellent essay: Erik H. Erikson, "On the Nature of Psycho-Historical Evidence: In Search of Ghandi," Daedalus, XCVIII:3 (Summer 1968), 695-730.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

years earlier. The concluding chapter of this study will attempt to reflect such a relevance as psychological observations a la Erikson are made about the early life of Richard Baxter. Thus, for this writer, Erikson's observations concerning the identity crisis which emerges in adolescence are extremely illuminating and helpful in properly interpreting the radical change which occurred in Baxter's behavior and ministry at Bridgnorth.

Erik H. Erikson is a "Neo-Freudian" psychoanalyst who has done more in recent years to champion the cause of psycho-historical investigation than any other person.[31] His Young Man Luther asks in what ways can the clinical analyst, who has made great contributions to ego psychology and cultural anthropology, assist the student of history? He is working with the problem related to the great men in history who create ideologies in which other people discover their beliefs. More precisely, he is interested in

[31]The historian with a curiosity about ego psychology and the "Neo-Freudian" influence in psychoanalysis will discover in addition to Erikson's writings in the following books to be helpful: Anna Freud, The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense (New York: Basic Books, 1952); Hans Hartman, Ego Psychology and the Problem of Adaptation (New York: International Universities Press, 1958); Hans Hartman, "Comments on the Psychoanalytic Theory of the Ego" in Essays on Ego Psychology (New York: International Universities Press, 1964); David Rapaport (ed.), Organization and Pathology of Thought (New York: Columbia University Press, 1941).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the relationship between the identity crisis of adolescence in Luther and the ideology he created.

The "identity crisis" is always the crisis of late adolescence, or in some individuals early adulthood, when the young person after having synthesized the experiences of each of the four previous stages of childhood, must move out of his childhood and assume a place in the adult world.[32]

Erikson emphasizes that this indeed is a "crisis," a crisis of uncertainty, when the youth must commit himself, usually after several unsuccessful starts, to a definition of himself that both he and others will recognize. He writes:

> I have called the major crisis of adolescence the identity crisis; it occurs in that period of the life cycle when each youth must forge for himself some central perspective and direction, some working unity, out of the effective remnants of his childhood and the hopes of his anticipated adulthood; he must detect some meaningful resemblance between what he has come to see in himself and what his sharpened awareness tells him others judge and accept him to be.[33]

[32]Erik H. Erikson has developed his theories of ego identity in numerous writings: Childhood and Society (New York: Norton, 1950); "Ego Development and Historical Change," in The Psychoanalytical Study of the Child, II (1946); "Growth and Crisis in the 'Healthy Personality'" in Murray and Kluckhorn (eds.), Personality in Nature, Culture, and Society (New York: Knopf, 1953); "The Problem of Ego Identity," Journal, American Psychoanalytic Association, IV (January 1956), 56-121; Identity; Youth and Crisis (New York: Norton, 1968).

[33]Erikson, Young Man Luther, p. 14.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

He stresses that the term "identity" expresses a mutual relationship in that it connotes both a persistent sameness within oneself (self-sameness) and a persistent sharing of some kind of essential character with others. Therefore, identity formation

> arises from the selective repudiation and mutual assimilation of childhood identifications, and their absorption in a new configuration, which, in turn, is dependent on the process by which a society (often through subsocieties) identifies the young individual, recognizing him as somebody who had to become the way he is, is taken for granted. The community, often not without some initial mistrust, gives such recognition with a (more or less institutionalized) display of surprise and pleasure in making the acquaintance of a newly emerging individual who cares to ask for recognition; it can, by the same token, feel deeply--and vengefully--rejected by the individual who does not seem to care.[34]

The major difficulty in getting a handle on Erikson's concept of identity resides in the multi-usage he gives to the term. Certainly, identification is the central category in ego development; however, one can readily distinguish at least three major meanings of identity in Erikson's work: (1) identity as imitation; (2) identity as the feeling of continuity about one's existence; (3) so-called ego identity. The third meaning is the most elusive and the most important.

The first, narrowest, and most precise meaning of identification is that involving imitation (i.e., a young

[34]Erikson, "The Problem of Ego Identity," p. 57.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

boy imitating the way his father walks). Erikson does not give undue prominence to this meaning of identification. In fact, he stresses how limited such a role imitation plays in personality formation. This particular job belongs to the synthesizing ego. Erikson cites Jung's concept of the persona (i.e., a social personality that is mainly role-playing) as an example of a weak ego yielding to a strong cultural prototype.[35]

Erikson includes in his definition of identity the sense of sameness within oneself; it is "a subjective sense of continuous existence and a coherent memory which may be lost in a state of amnesia."[36] When discussing identity he makes at least passing reference to this meaning--a person's sense of sameness and continuity. "No other meaning of identity is even possible without presupposing this fundamental definition of the self as a stable structure that endures in time."[37]

The third meaning, and certainly the most frequently used, is that of "ego identity." When focusing on this aspect of Erikson's usage of the term, we discover no single definition, but a whole family of meanings and

[35]Erikson, Identity, p. 38.

[36]Quoted in Yankelovitch and Barrett, op. cit., p. 126.

[37]Ibid., p. 127.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

processes. A few of the more important follow.

Clearly, Erikson uses ego identity in a different sense from simple awareness of continuity, or the result of imitation, neither of which had been lost by those World War II victims he interviewed at the Mt. Zion Veterans Hospital. He comments, "What impressed me most was the loss in these men of a sense of identity. They knew who they were; they had a personal identity. But it was as if subjectively their lives no longer hung together --and never would again. There was a central disturbance of what I then started to call ego identity."[38]

Erikson pursued his investigations in ego identity at the Austin Riggs Clinic in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, where he was working exclusively with disturbed adolescents. From this experience he has described in an accomplished prose style just how the ego identity comes into being. Its formulation occurs towards the close of adolescence as the synthesis and crystallization of certain comprehensive gains of preadult experience occur. For him the maintenance of ego identity is a life-long process; it takes on its formative shape and character during this period of transition between childhood and adulthood.

He sees colleges and apprenticeships of different kinds as providing for the emerging identity a

[38]Erikson, Childhood and Society, p. 38.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

psycho-social moratorium "during which the young adult through free role experimentation may find a niche in some section of his society, a niche which is firmly defined and yet seems to be uniquely made for him."[39] This moratorium is a period of delay granted to the individual who is not ready to meet an obligation, a delay in meeting adult commitments, during which an individual can complete the process of achieving a lasting pattern of inner identity.

Erikson believes society has a key role in providing the institutionalized setting for these vital experiences. Society has the function of guiding and narrowing the choices for the individual. He particularly notes the role of "other people," especially adult parents, and their importance in evoking the adolescent's intense ambivalence.[40] Thus, he views such activity as a crisis because of the radical change which is taking place in the young person's perspective. But, he explains, "Crisis is used here in a developmental sense to connote not a threat of catastrophe, but a turning point, a crucial period of increased vulnerability and heightened potential, and therefore, the ontogenetic course of generational strength and maladjustment."[41] He acknowledges this

[39]Erikson, Identity, p. 156.

[40]Ibid., pp. 44-90. [41]Ibid., p. 96.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

psychosocial task of achieving a lasting ego identity as an enormously complex process.

When, in later years, the young person's experiences are compatible with an inner structure of meanings, he faces a sense of unity, fitness, a feeling of oneness with himself, his environment, with life itself. Erikson uses an illustration drawn from a letter of William James to describe this unique experience.

> A man's character is discernible in the mental or moral attitude in which, when it came upon him, he felt himself most deeply and intensely active and alive. At such moments there is a voice inside which speaks and says: 'This is the real me!'[42]

Erikson points out that James uses the word "character," but that he was taking the liberty of claiming that James does so in a way which can in principle be experienced by any man. In such a manner does a mature person come to the astonishing awareness of his identity.

The historian will surely welcome Erikson's shift from exclusive emphasis on infancy and the early family romance to a more extensive view of ego development, including periods of life that are better documented and hence more accessible to historical treatment. Historians prefer to deal with epochs of full consciousness, whether in the evolution of peoples or in the career of an individual. Moreover, an emphasis on adolescence and

[42] Ibid., p. 19.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

early manhood facilitates the historian's task. Reliable evidence on childhood is usually scanty, even in the lives of very prominent men, yet in contrast the years from fifteen to thirty are often well documented. Such an approach and emphasis on this later stage of a person's history are certainly congenial to the historian, more so than the earlier (and almost exclusive) stress on the first six or seven years of a person's life.

One area in which the historian must be continually on guard is in the selection of materials to fill each of the boxes in Erikson's eight stages--which have the appearance of being rather arbitrary and mechanistic. To do so, says Manuel, "is to make of a scheme a self-fulfillment prophecy."[43]

However, the basic problem associated with the application of twentieth century psychoanalytic thought to historical investigation has still remained unsolved. Is the ideal psychological model of human development in eight stages constructed by Erikson universally acceptable? And, is this not really a summary of twentieth century thought and experience whose relevance to other cultures and periods in history are open to question?

Despite these and other serious misgivings about some of the uses of psychology in history, it is obvious

[43]Manuel, op. cit., p. 200.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

that we have come a long way from the intellectualist psychological history of the earlier part of this century. I cast my lot with Hughes, Mazlish, Manuel, and others who maintain that Freudian "psychologizers" will be a much stronger influence in historical investigation in the coming years. "A historian can scarcely compose a narrative line without commiting himself, implicitly or explicitly, to some theory of personality and motivation."[44] For the historian probably is today as never before obliged to accept and express himself in the psychological language of his times. Therefore, there is no escape from Freudian conceptions in some form. In the end however, psychology will possibly play a more modest role, such as "adding a set of vivid colors to the historian's palette."[45]

To illustrate the plausibility of my argument that historical investigation can be illuminated through the utilization of modern psychological insights and discoveries, I have set forth in the next chapter, as completely as possible, the recorded events and experiences of Richard Baxter during his ministry at Dudley and Bridgnorth. This information, along with several additional experiences of earlier years, will provide the raw historical data from which psychological observations and

[44] Ibid., p. 205.

[45] Ibid., p. 208.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

insights will be drawn in the concluding chapter of this study.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

CHAPTER IV

CRISIS AT BRIDGNORTH

Baxter had been exposed to the teachings of the Nonconformists long before encountering them personally in a confrontation at Bridgnorth. In a sense, the Puritan atmosphere within his father's home resembled the spirit of Nonconformity, in that there was constant reading of the Holy Scriptures, prayers were offered extemporaneously, and Sabbath worship was strictly adhered to. He admired the zeal of the Nonconformists, and he especially noticed the simplicity and warmth of their sermons. The simplicity and earnestness with which they approached the Protestant Faith never ceased to be thrilling and inspiring to the young Baxter.

The history of Nonconformity at this time was neither extensive nor clearly defined--there were so many forms of this unusual type of religious tradition. Nonconformity had its rise with the Puritan Separatists of the sixteenth century England. Much legislation had been passed to counter the progress, influence, and growth of Puritanism; Queen Elizabeth culminated the restrictions by signing into legislation "An Act to Retain the Queen's Subjects in Their Obedience" in 1593. Banishment from the realm was the penalty for refusal to worship regularly in the state church according to the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Book of Common Prayer. The Act of Uniformity in 1559 labeled as "Nonconformists" those persons who rejected the claims that the Church of England was the only authorized and recognized church in England. Thus, Nonconformist was a broad title which related to nearly every group which had separated from, or grown up outside, the Church of England. It was an outlawed brand of religion.

During these formative years of Baxter's life (1638-1640), Puritanism and Nonconformity were still viewed as heretical and unlawful forms of Christianity. Their chief opponent during the 1620's and 1630's was Bishop Laud. Laud wielded immense power, first as the Bishop of London (1628) then later as the Archbishop of Canterbury (1633). He came to be virtually Charles' first minister. It was his desire to eradicate every manifestation of Puritanism from England. Fortunately for the Puritans, while Charles decided to rule without a parliament, he also granted a charter to the Massachusetts Bay Company. Approximately one thousand Puritans left England for Massachusetts in 1630, and by 1640 it is estimated that some twenty thousand persons had crossed the sea, the majority seeking religious freedom and peace apart from Laud and his intolerance. Thus, the cause of Nonconformity in England suffered somewhat during the 1630's because many of the more enlightened, dedicated, and learned spokesmen for its cause had migrated to the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

shores of New England, among them such notables as John Cotton and Thomas Hooker.

The obvious conclusion one must reach is that Baxter was fully aware of the unfavorable position that the Nonconformists held in the eyes of Laud and the mother church. Also, he knew that their beliefs and practices were considered heretical and a threat to the peace and unity of the church. An acceptance of Nonconformity by Baxter would amount to nothing short of a conversion experience itself; however, I prefer to interpret his encounter and final acceptance of Nonconformity as elements of Baxter's identity formation rather than a conversion experience.

His initial personal encounter with adherents of Nonconformity came when he was introduced to several men from Shrewsbury. Up to this time he says, "I was satisfied in the matter of Conformity. Whilst I was young I had never been acquainted with any that were against it or that questioned it."[1] Till this experience his religious piety had been somewhat conventional and formal. He had simply never met or talked with anyone who was not in good standing with the Church of England--neither had he ever heard anyone speaking against the Church of England, or

[1]Richard Baxter, Reliquiae Baxterianae (London: Printed for Parkhurst, 1696), Part I, p. 13.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

pointing out any of its flaws or shortcomings. It is obvious from the following statement that these men made a deep and lasting impression on Baxter. He writes,

> At last, about twenty years of age, I became acquainted with Mr. Simmonds, Mr. Cradock, and other very zealous godly Nonconformists in Shrewsbury and the adjoining parts, whose fervent prayers and savoury conference and holy lives did profit me much. And when I understood that they were people prosecuted by the bishops, I found much prejudice arise in my heart against those that persecuted them, and thought those that silenced and troubled such men could not be the genuine followers of the Lord of Love.[2]

Baxter says that at his first meeting with Mr. Walter Cradock he discovered the gentleman was in hiding and going by the name of a Mr. Williams.[3] Cradock's influence on Baxter is best seen in Baxter's Plain Scripture Proof of Infants Church-Membership and Baptism (1650), in which he encourages his readers to "read Mr. Cradock's Gospel-Liberty" from which he freely quotes with approval.[4] Even though in later years (1674), Baxter became disenchanted with the theology of Cradock, calling it "Antinomian," he could still refer to this long time

[2] Ibid.

[3] Geoffrey F. Nuttall, The Welsh Saints (1640-1660) (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1957), p. 19. Nuttall cites Baxter's Catholic Communion Defended but gives no page number.

[4] Richard Baxter, Plain Scripture Proof of Infants Church-Membership and Baptism (London: 1650), p. 7.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

acquaintance and friend as "a most zealous man for practical godliness."[5]

One result of his meeting with Cradock, Simmonds, and others was that it convinced him to commence a study of the divisions and issues at stake between Conformity and Nonconformity within the religious life of England. The results of his study favored Conformity, so much so that now when he thought of ordination, he had no scruple at all against Subscription.[6]

Baxter later came to realize that his study had been somewhat one-sided because of the nature of his sources. The books and articles which he had been reading favored Nonconformity and certainly were not the best representative books nor the most significant statements of the movement. He confesses, "My teachers and my books caused me in general to think the Conformists had the better cause, I kept out all particular scruples by that opinion."[7]

Another development was the forming of a long friendship with James Berry who was committed to the cause of Nonconformity. Writing on 12 September 1659 to now Major-General Berry (he had been elevated by the Protector,

[5]Quoted in Nuttall, op. cit., p. 20.

[6]Baxter, Reliquiae, I, 13.

[7]Ibid., I, 13.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Cromwell, as defender for Wales and the Border Countries in 1655), Baxter says, "I doubt not but many thousands souls thank you when they read that you were the man that led me into the ministry."[8] Yet, in Part I of the Reliquiae, Baxter makes no mention or reference to the role Berry played when discussing his decision to enter the ministry. His only reference concerns Berry's having been the means whereby Mr. Foley appointed Baxter to be the new schoolmaster at Dudley.[9]

He has discovered that old Mr. Richard Foley, of Stourbridge in Worcestershire, had recovered some alienated lands in Dudley, which had been left for charitable uses; and added something of his own; and built a convenient new schoolhouse; and was able to choose his first schoolmaster. It was Berry who convinced the young Baxter that he should apply for the open position. Baxter admits it was an agreeable assignment because it would afford him an opportunity to preach to the poor and ignorant of Dudley. So, off to Dudley went the three of them, i.e., Baxter, Berry, and Foley; however, there was a brief pause in their travels in Worcester for the matter of Baxter's ordination.[10]

[8]Richard Baxter, A Treatise of Self-Denial (London: 1660), Epistle Dedicatory.

[9]Baxter, Reliquiae, I, 13. [10]Ibid.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Baxter was ordained a deacon of the Church of England on 23 December 1638 by the Bishop of Worcester, John Thornborough. The certificate of ordination, together with the license to teach at Dudley, granted five days earlier by the bishop's vicar-general, James Littleton, is still extant.[11] Baxter settled in the new school at Dudley and lived in the house of Mr. Richard Foley, Junior. "I there preached my first public sermon in the upper parish church; and afterwards preached in the villages about, and there had occasion to fall afresh upon the study of Conformity."[12]

Here the events in the life of young Baxter not only heighten, but they begin to multiply and intensify with the passing of each day. After his ordination, he is determined to give the opposing viewpoint a new hearing. He was supported in his defense and arguments for Conformity by a neighboring minister, Mr. William Fenner, who lived only two miles away at Sedgeley. Baxter says Fenner's wonderful preaching served to "honor Conformity and stir up Nonconformity."[13]

Baxter now begins a systematic study of the whole problem of Episcopacy in general, but especially the

[11]Jeoffrey F. Nuttall, Richard Baxter (London: Nelson, 1965), p. 17.

[12]Baxter, Reliquiae, I, 13. [13]Ibid.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

English form, then the more specific practices of the church such as kneeling at the Sacrament and the wearing of the surplice by the minister. In his investigation he used the writings of such notables as Thomas Cartwright, John Whitgift, William Ames, and John Burgess.[14] His Nonconformists friends lent him "manuscripts and books which I never saw before; whereupon I thought it my Duty to set up a serious impartial trial of the whole cause."[15]

He writes of his Dudley experiences three times later during his life, and each time he describes the encounter in exactly the same detail--no discrepancies appearing anywhere. Thus, one of the conclusions I have drawn from this observation is that these experiences at Dudley with the Nonconformists were dramatic and did make a lasting impression on young Baxter. Though he did not record his perceptions of these events in a diary or journal immediately following their occurrence, this lack does not indicate or reveal that they were meaningless at the time. Nor do these later references simply indicate and reflect the nostalgia of old age, thereby declaring their use for future historical investigations invalid.

Baxter remarks that Ames and Burgess (Ames' father-in-law) were reputed to be the strongest spokesmen for the positions under investigation. Prior to his arrival at

[14] Ibid., I, 14. [15] Ibid., I, 13.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Dudley he said, "I had never read anything on the other side, nor ever read the Book of Ordination, nor exactly weighed what I subscribed to."[16] However, while at Dudley his Nonconformist friends "brought me to resolve to read the writings of both sides impartially . . . so that setting upon the controversy again with my most serious studies, I settled in the judgment which I never since changed, about Liturgy and Ceremonies."[17] That which changed him proved to be the arguments provided by William Ames.

> So I borrowed Amesius his Fresh Suit, etc., and because I could not keep it, I transcribed the strength of it in the broad margin of Dr. Burges His Rejoynder, over against each Paragraph which he (Ames) replied to: And I spent a considerable time in the strictest Examination of both which I could perform.[18]

Of significant value in the above paragraph is his reference to transcribing Ames' thought in his own book by Burges and then giving each side considerable time in evaluation. The impact of Ames' arguments on Baxter is readily discernable when one begins to read Baxter's Five Disputations of Church Government and Worship (1659). There is an astonishing similarity between the arguments

[16]Richard Baxter, An Apology for the Nonconformist Ministry (London: 1681), p. 54.

[17]Ibid., pp. 59-60.

[18]Baxter, Reliquiae, I, 14.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

of Ames and Baxter in their protest against the presence and utilization of human ceremonies in Divine Worship. It is as though one is reading Ames' Fresh Suit cast in the Baxter style. Baxter dresses up Ames' thought in new garments to present to his reading public.

Ames, following the lead of Zwingli, had challenged the use of human ceremonies in divine worship, i.e., making the sign of the cross in baptism, wearing the surplice, kneeling to receive the Holy Communion, etc. His conclusion, as was Baxter's is that all customs of the church "in the Gospell they do not read, they condemne."[19] He also believed that the first example of human ceremonies being imposed in an orthodox church upon God's people was to be found in the Church of England. The primary and over-riding principle which governed his rejection of human ceremonies in worship was simply that "we might enjoy the full liberty of the Gospell, as in other Reformed Churches, that doe else where, upō whom, the heavy burden of authority hath imposed no great burden."[20] Ames felt the people of an individual congregation were autonomous within themselves, and they possessed the Scriptural authority to form their own liturgy for worship. Therefore,

[19]William Ames, Fresh Suit against Human Ceremonies in Worship (Rotterdam: 1633), p. 8. Italics mine.

[20]Ibid., p. 13. Italics mine.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

no one, not even church or government, had the right or authority to impose any liturgy or restrictions upon them which they disagreed with or would reject. He supported this position by stating that similar human ceremonies had been rejected by the great continental reformers, Calvin and Zwingli.

Ames defines a human ceremony as "an outward action designed and purposely observed and done, in reference to some other thing, to the substance whereof it is neither a cause nor a part."[21] And any addition to worship which is not a part of cause for worship, specifically when not permitted by the Scriptures, one should be free and is obliged to preserve God's Word and worship by rejecting such practices from worship.

It is my understanding that Ames' Fresh Suit played a vital and significant role in convincing Baxter of the validity of the Nonconformist position. It is regretted that he didn't state exactly how much he was influenced by Ames; yet, from his own statement and his Five Disputations it is obvious he was well acquainted with the thought of this great Puritan theologian.

After reading Ames, Baxter was able to see clearly several issues at stake which separated the Conformists and Nonconformists. He could then balance these arguments

[21] Ibid., p. 21.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

against his own thought. Reluctantly he confesses that while at Dudley he discovered that "Subscription, and the cross in Baptism, and the promiscuous giving of the Lord's Supper to all Drunkards, Swearers, Fornicators, Scorners at Godliness, etc. . . . These Three were all that I now became a Nonconformist to."[22]

Baxter also projects possibly a sense of guilt and ambiguity which accompanied his newly acquired insights. He says of his own Nonconformity "most of this I kept to myself."[23] He tried to hide his convictions by engaging other Nonconformists in further debates. He covers his new insights which would cast him in a disfavorable light with the Bishops and other officials of the Church of England. It would also keep him from advancements to more prestigious preaching assignments in the future. His disputing at this time was relatively minor and insignificant--the major issue of human ceremonies had already been settled. To continue his disguise he excuses himself by blaming the censoriousness and inclinations towards separation by the Nonconformists to be a threatening evil and therefore contrary to Christian charity and church unity.[24]

[22]Baxter, Reliquiae, I, 14.

[23]Ibid.

[24]Ibid.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Baxter remained at Dudley only nine months before moving to a more glamorous assignment at Bridgnorth. He does not remark as to what success or failure, if any, he had in his work as a schoolmaster while at Dudley. He does say the city was "famous for drunkeness but commonly more ready to hear God's Word with submission and reformation than most places where I have come."[25]

While at Dudley Baxter had stated that he began to study "first in order" the problem of Episcopacy in general, especially the English form, then on to the problem of human ceremonies in Divine Worship. He was convinced of the error of adding human ceremonies to divine worship, and though he was not convinced, as was Ames, that all forms of Episcopacy were unlawful, he was convinced that the non-scriptural form which the Church of England had adopted was. Therefore, it is highly possible that when he left Dudley for Bridgnorth, Baxter was also disturbed inwardly over the nature of English Episcopacy, and thus "ripe for picking" by the Nonconformist. The appearance of the "Etcetera Oath" in 1640 was the straw which broke the camel's back.

Note the scope of this statement, "I was absolutely for Episcopacy as it is with us, till 1640, when the new canons came out with the etcetera oath, and that was the

[25] Ibid.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

very thing that occasioned such nonconformity as I am guilty of at this day."[26] Bridgnorth completed the transformation and ended his search for a meaningful Christian identity and life style. This new image was to be fashioned in accordance with the teachings of the Holy Scriptures--it completed his quest for a cause and vocation of his own choosing.

Bridgnorth proved to be one of the most formidable periods of Baxter's life, for it was here that the imposition of the Etcetera Oath made him review carefully certain doctrines and practices of the Anglican Church. His invitation to Bridgnorth was to fill the vacant position of preacher and assistant to the pastor, Reverend William Mastard, who also held the position of Ordinary with jurisdiction over six parishes.[27] Baxter felt this was just the place for him, primarily because "the place is privileged from all episcopal jurisdiction, except the archbishop's triennial visitation."[28] One can only speculate whether or not he accepted this position because it would provide him with an opportunity to practice his Nonconformity without fear of bishops or any other clerical official's untimely visitation.

[26]Baxter, An Apology, p. 60.

[27]Baxter, Reliquiae, I, 15.

[28]Ibid.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The impact of Dudley can be seen clearly in the manner and method in which Baxter implemented his ministry in Bridgnorth. Of Bridgnorth he remarks, "I had a very full congregation to preach to, and a freedom from all those things which I scrupled or thought unlawful. I often read the Common Prayer before I preached, both on the Lord's-days and Holy-days, but I never administered the Lord's Supper, nor ever Baptized any child with the sign of the cross, nor ever wore the surplice, nor was ever put to appear at any bishop's court."[29] Mr. Mastard administered the Sacrament of Holy Communion; however, Baxter did exhibit his Nonconformist spirit and conviction with reference to infant baptism and vestments. He thus was provided an opportunity while at Bridgnorth to practice his several convictions without fear of reprisal from the bishop.

Of the people at Bridgnorth Baxter says they "proved a very ignorant, dead-hearted people . . . Though I was in the fervour of my affections, and never anywhere preached with more vehement desires of men's conversion . . . an applause of the preacher was most of the success of the sermon which I could hear of; and their tippling and ill company and dead-heartedness quickly drowned all."[30]

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

In the Reliquiae Baxter maintains that the first of two threats of expulsion which came to him while at Bridgnorth was that of a new oath which was passed by the Convocation.

This oath, inserted in the Canons, was to be taken by every clergyman, every Master of Arts not the son of a Nobleman, all who had taken a degree in divinity, law, or physic, all registrars, actuaries, proctors and schoolmasters. The oath's ambiguity stemmed from the vague use of the term "etcetera" as well as the asserted illegality of the Convocation, and for these reasons was dropped by the king's order in August of the same year.[31] However, this deletion and change in August did not alter the impact this timely piece of legislation made on the life of Richard Baxter. It reads in part:

> I, A. B., do swear that I do approve the doctrine and discipline, or government established in the Church of England, as containing all things necessary to salvation, and that I will not endeavor by myself or any other, directly or indirectly, to bring in any Popish doctrine contrary to that which is so established; nor will I ever give my consent to alter the government of this Church by archbishops, bishops, deans, and archdeacons, etc., as it now stands established.[32]

[31] Henry Gee and William Hardy (eds.), Documents Illustrative of English Church History (New York: Kraus, 1966), p. 536.

[32] Ibid.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

With the circulation of the Etcetera Oath in the area of Bridgnorth, the ministers of the surrounding area decided to meet in Bridgnorth for the purpose of discussing the oath with hopes of arriving at a unified position either supporting or rejecting its affirmations. Some were for the oath, but according to Baxter the majority of those affected and concerned did not approve. He said the oath "put me on deeper thoughts of the point of Episcopacy, and of the English frame of Church government, than ever I had before; and now I had the opportunity of seeing some books which I never had before."[33]

We may feel certain that before he signed such an oath, he would not only read it but would weigh its content and seek to determine its future impact upon the church. For the first time he "saw that such an oath and covenant, so Universally imposed, was made the test and terms of Church Concord. And so would be an Engine of division by shutting out all that could not take it."[34] It is also my contention that Baxter's keen concern for Church Unity is the direct outgrowth of this crisis. He viewed the oath as a means of excluding from the bosom of the Church Nonconformists whom he came to know and love

[33]Baxter, Reliquiae, I, 16.

[34]Richard Baxter, A Treatise of Episcopacy (London: 1881), p. A.4, Preface.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

and respect as being good examples of Christian piety. Baxter could not be a part of a church which was instituted and organized along lines which would exclude from its membership those persons who were beautiful examples of Christ, but who differed slightly from mother church in doctrine.

That which brought Baxter to the front in the Bridgnorth discussions was his being asked to participate in a debate concerning the pros and cons of the Etcetera Oath--he had been asked to debate against the oath. "This oath so startled them (ministers) that they appointed a meeting at Bridgnorth to consult about it . . . It fell to my lot to be the objector, or opponent, against Mr. Christophy Cartwright . . . (he) defended the oath."[35]

For his preparation and study Baxter secured copies of Gerson Bucer's de Regimine Ecclesia and Altare Damascen, and Paul Baynes' Diocesans Trial, and de Politeia Ecclesiastica of Robert Parker, plus other books.[36] At no time during the debate was Baxter ever convinced by the arguments Cartwright presented in support of the oath. Baxter's primary concern was, "The whole frame of the present Church-Government was about to be fixed, as by an oath of allegiance, on the land . . . and to be woven

[35] Ibid.

[36] Baxter, An Apology, p. 60.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

into the constitution, as it were true, No Bishops, No King."[37]

Baxter became convinced that the present form of English Episcopacy was Scripturally unlawful, though not all forms of Episcopacy, and he was equally satisfied "that the English diocesan frame was guilty of the corruption of the churches and the ministry, and of the ruin of the true Church discipline."[38]

The meeting adjourned with the ministers uniformly opposed to the Etcetera Oath. It also meant Baxter was not in the fold of Nonconformity. He continued to minister within the Church of England until 1662 when the Act of Uniformity silenced all Nonconformist and banned their ministers from occupying pastorates in England.

One final comment is necessary concerning Baxter's ministry before concluding this portion of our investigation. During the period 1647-60 Baxter labored diligently in the parish at Kidderminster. Kemp calls this ministry A Pastoral Triumph. By almost any standard of measurement his stay there must be termed successful. Kidderminster became the model parish, and Baxter's prescription for pastoral responsibility (patterned after his own concept of ministry), set forth in his Reformed Pastor, not only

[37]Baxter, A Treatise of Episcopacy, A.4.

[38]Baxter, Reliquiae, I, 16.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

has become a classic for study, but a model of ministry worthy of emulation by Christian clergy till this day. One aspect of his particular ministry which is often overlooked by commentators of Baxter is the fact that during his entire ministry in the parish at Kidderminster Baxter never waivered from the Nonconformist convictions and position which he obtained at Dudley and Bridgnorth. The reason for such an oversight is possibly due to the fact that during and after the Civil War of the 1640's, Nonconformity was recognized as an acceptable form of worship and ministry. However, with the Restoration of the monarchy in 1660 things began to get worse for the Nonconformist cause.

In March 1661 a Royal Commission was appointed, containing representatives of the bishops and the Presbyterians to meet in "the Master's Lodging in the Savoy."[39] They were instructed to consult regarding the Book of Common Prayer and by agreement to make any alterations necessary to afford satisfaction to wounded clergymen, and to restore unity to the Church. However, before the Savoy Conference could complete its discussions, the Act of Uniformity was passed through the House of Commons,

[39]Baxter, Reliquiae, II, 305.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

"an odd way to treat a royal commission."[40]

The Act of Uniformity received royal assent on 19 May 1662. The date for the ejection of the clergy not episcopally ordained, or who unwillingly refused to give full endorsement to the Book of Common Prayer, was set for 24 August 1662.[41]

Baxter possessed episcopal ordination and did not oppose the Book of Common Prayer in principle. But, with a Church to be established on terms intended to exclude, he could not conform or participate. The "mere Catholick" could not be other than Nonconformist all the way. He did not wait for 24 August to arrive, but preached his farewell sermon some six days later on 25 May 1662. "When Bartholomew Day came, about one thousand eight hundred or two thousand ministers were silenced and cast out."[42] This purge in 1662 was purely religious in nature, and it took place all at once. About 2,000 out of 10,000 of the clergy were ejected. No such drastic purge had ever taken place in England. For all practical purposes this bit of legislation cut the head off the Nonconformist movement in England and put an end to religious toleration on that

[40]Hugh Martin, Puritanism and Richard Baxter (London: S.C.M. Press, 1954), p. 52.

[41]Baxter, Reliquiae, II, 384.

[42]Ibid., II, 385.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Christian island for approximately two centuries. It is tragic that even the Act of Toleration in 1689 could not resurrect the spark of Nonconformity and religious liberty which had been so prevalent during the first half of the seventeenth century.

For an insight into how these conditions and experiences influenced the life of Richard Baxter, we will now turn to view some psychological observations concerning his early life and development.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

CHAPTER V

PSYCHOLOGICAL OBSERVATIONS OF BAXTER'S EARLY LIFE

Richard Baxter lived long before the advent of the science of psychology as we know it today. There were men of the seventeenth century, such as Descartes, Hobbes and Locke, who occupied a prominent position in the history of psychology; however, they were primarily philosophers, and psychology was thought of as a branch of philosophy. Psychology as a practical aid of therapeutic value had not yet been conceived, and such fields as psychotherapy and mental health were still many decades in the future.

Yet, the most cursory reading of Baxter reveals he possessed an insight into human nature far ahead of his day and age. J. M. Lloyd-Thomas, in his "Introductory" to Baxter's Autobiography, points out that Baxter attained an understanding of the subtleties of evasion and rationalization that are amazingly modern. He studied and listed the causes of melancholy. Thomas writes: "His remarks on this subject suggest that our modern psycho-analysts would have had little except their techniques to teach him."[1] Most significant perhaps is the fact that during his

[1]Richard Baxter, Autobiography (New York: Dutton, 1931), p. xvii.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

lifetime he also gained a penetrating insight into himself which is admirably recorded in the "Self-Analysis" section of the Reliquiae.[2]

As has been noted, Baxter did not have the advantage of a formal study of psychology. His observations of human nature were colored and shaped by his Puritan theology, and his particular insights came from intense struggles in his own life, from vast and extensive reading, especially the Scriptures, and from pondering the meaning of a life while preparing and writing his sermons and books, but, above all, from his intimate, first-hand contact with people. These insights and observations frequently found expression in his writings. An example is as follows:

> He that will blow the coals must not wonder if some sparks do fly in his face; and that to persecute men and then call them to charity is like whipping children to make them give over crying. . . . I saw that he that will be loved, must love; and he that rather chooseth to be more feared than loved, must expect to be hated, or loved diminutively. And he that will have children must be a father; and he that will be a tyrant must be contented with slaves.[3]

Such insights and observations are obviously from the pen of one who had experienced life in its fullness; certainly one would have to admit that the above statements

[2]Richard Baxter, Reliquiae Baxterianae (London: Printed for Parkhurst, 1696), Part I, pp. 124-38.

[3]Ibid., I, 14.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

are those of a sensitive, aware, mature individual who had properly integrated and come to terms with life. However, we must not forget that Baxter was compelled to wrestle with the great issues in life with all their accompanying problems prior to achieving such maturity. If psychology has told us anything, it has certainly convinced modern man that maturity is the result of severe struggles and crises which are a part of human existence, and with which every soul must struggle successfully in order to attain a healthy maturity. Baxter is no exception as psychological reflections upon his early life will indicate.

Erikson lists several "elements" which are commonly found in the identity crisis of adolescence. These elements are normally encountered by every person engaged in a quest for a recognizable and acceptable identity. They also reflect the dominant concerns of that young person. Some of the more obvious ones are a need to trust in someone or something, the personal freedom to choose, an occupational identity and group identity. Other factors involving physical and social adjustments are continuums throughout the remaining stages of the life cycle. Most of Erikson's elements are also present in Baxter's early life. This portion of my investigation will concern itself with these elements as they appear in Baxter. It is hoped these psychological observations will support my supposition that possibly during this often neglected segment of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

his life Baxter experienced a crisis in identity not too dissimilar to those experienced by adolescents today.

Sufferings and struggles came early in the life of Baxter. All of his problems were not readily solved, but he did attain satisfactory adjustments. He was subjected to the usual difficulties of childhood. His father, as well as his grandfather, was addicted to gambling; yet, "It pleased God to instruct and change my father . . . And God made him the instrument of my first convictions, and approbation of a holy life, as well as of my restraint from the grosser sort of lives."[4] Richard was reared in a home where the Bible was read each day, prayers were extemporaneously rendered, and public worship on the Sabbath was mandatory.

His father's emphasis on the dangers in sinning, the necessity to live a holy life, and the glory of heaven, made a deep and lasting impression on this sensitive child. It left him with a great fear of sin which remained with him throughout life. At times during his youth this proved to be very troublesome and caused him much anxiety about his guilty state of being. His account of internal battles with conscience reminds one of the Confessions of St. Augustine or the young Luther in Staupitz's confessional. He listed eight sins of youth which caused him considerable regret. They were addiction to lying to escape punishment; addiction to gluttonous

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

eating of apples and pears; stealing fruit from orchards in company with other "naughty body"; excessive play and covetous of money; a love for romances, fables, and old wives' tales; too much foolish chat and vivid imagination; too much pride in his learning; irreverence towards his parents.[5] Obviously, many of these confessions would cause little concern to the average youth today; however, they were a source of real anguish and distress for Baxter.

At about age fifteen, Baxter says it pleased God to awaken his soul; at this time he also became increasingly concerned that his sense of sin was not as great as he thought it ought to have been. Baxter also became distressed because he could not determine the exact time and date of his conversion experience as he thought he should be able to do. Yet, his concern for the things of God continued to increase each year and he began to prepare himself for the ministry. He was continually haunted by this sensitiveness to sin and the great hindrance it becomes to the Christian minister and people of God. We know that such experiences leave lasting impressions on one's personality; this fear of sin also left its mark on Baxter. The major appealing feature of death as figured in The Saints Everlasting Rest is that at last the saint is free from sin and its temptations.

[5] Ibid.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Possibly Baxter's greatest handicap throughout all of his life was his poor physical condition. He refers to his ailments and poor state of health more than anything else. Powicke says, "All through his life he was a sick and suffering man and the victim of his own and others' medical experiments."[6] When just a young boy he suffered from a violent cough and the spitting of blood for over two years. He said of this condition, "It made the World seem to me as a Carkass that had neither Life nor Loveliness . . . It destroyed those ambitious desires after Literate Fame . . . It restrained me from that sportful Levity and Vanity which my nature and youthfulness did much incline me to."[7] Thus, he says, "Was I long kept with the calls of approaching death at one ear and the questionings of a doubting conscience at the other."[8] It was this constant awareness and apprehension of existing on the borders of everlasting rest which prompted him to live, study, and preach those things that were necessary "as a dying man to dying men."

In the Reliquiae Baxter refers to a variety of physical difficulties which included cough, nosebleed, constant head-aches, toothaches, sore eyes so bad that he

[6]Frederick J. Powicke, A Life of the Reverend Richard Baxter (London: Cape, 1924), p. 54.

[7]Baxter, Reliquiae, I, 5. [8]Ibid.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

could scarcely stand the light, consumption, and a variety of more severe ailments. Many times during his life his neighbors would meet to fast and pray for his recovery. "In my labours at Kidderminster after my return, I did all under languishing weakness, being seldom an hour free from pain."[9]

Baxter observes that he did benefit from his physical misfortune. He gave thanks to God that he was delivered in spite of constant pain and weakness from being overcome with melancholy, and that despite his pain he was not disabled so that he was prevented from discharging his duties, but could study and preach and walk almost as well as if he had been free from his infirmities.[10]

He capitalized on his illness and took advantages of the lessons learned from the suffering and pain. His illnesses thrust him to learn more of the things of God. It prompted him to live a more devout and holy life before the Almighty. Fearing death might come at any moment, Baxter did not desire to enter eternity with unconfessed sins on his record. He says his illnesses caused him "to meet Temptations and Sensuality with the greatest fear, and made them less effectual against me."[11] In addition,

[9] Ibid., I, 80.

[10] Ibid., I, 10.

[11] Ibid., I, 5.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

his values and manner of living were greatly affected by his wretched health. "Weakness and pain helped me to study how to die; that set me on studying how to live."[12] He writes of his sickened condition,

> It set me upon that method of my studies which since then I have found the benefit of, . . . It caused me first to seek God's Kingdom and his righteousness, and most to mind the one thing needful; and to determine first of my ultimate end; by which I was engaged to choose out and prosecute all other studies but only as meant to that end. Therefore, divinity was not only carried on with the rest of my studies with an equal hand, but always had the first and chiefest place . . . And by that means all that I read did stick the better in my memory, and also less of my time was lost by lazy intermissions.[13]

One final remark as to the effect of his physical condition upon his spiritual development is seen in these often quoted words of Baxter, "The case of my body had a great operation upon my soul."[14] One dare not underestimate the impact of his weakened physical condition in these early years of development.

Baxter also suffered from a lifelong feeling of inferiority because of his lack of a university education. As noted in an earlier reference, his early formal education was most inadequate. His instructors were members of the clergy who for the most part were either unlearned or incompetent.

[12]Quoted by Thomas in Baxter, Autobiography, p. xvii.

[13]Baxter, Reliquiae, I, 5-6. [14]Ibid., I, 9.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

In spite of all this, Baxter developed a thirst for knowledge and learning which would not be denied--he literally educated himself. He was a voluminous reader and did achieve the standing of a scholar during his lifetime. In several instances it is apparent that he was better educated than his fellow clergy who were trained in the universities of England. This did not quench the fact that he still wished desperately that he could have attained the university degrees and education that eluded him in his early years.

He laments that the chief sin of his childhood was his ambitious desires for "Literate Fame."[15] He goes on to say, "I had a desire before to have attained the highest Academical Degree and Reputation of Learning, and to have chosen out my Studies accordingly; but, Sickness and Solicitousness for my doubting Soul did shame away these Thoughts as Fooleries and Childrens Plays."[16]

Baxter had to struggle with this deficiency when contemplating ecclesiastical ordination in the Church of England. He had come to believe that a formal university education was requisite to ensure a successful public ministry. Thus he says,

> I was in great perplexity between my Encouragement and my Discouragements; I was conscious of my personal insufficiency, for want of that measure of Learning and

[15] Ibid., I, 5.

[16] Ibid.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> Experience, which so great and high a work required . . . I knew that the want of Academical Honours and Degrees was like to make me contemptable with the most and consequently hinder the Success of my Endeavours . . . But, I resolved that if one or two souls only might be won to God it would easily recompense all the dishonour which for want of Titles I might undergo from men.[17]

Orme insists that it was not uncommon for those who have not enjoyed the benefits of attending the university for an education to frequently make up the deficiency by the greater ardour of their application to private study. He says this was true in the case of Baxter. "Conscious of the imperfection of his early education, he applied himself with indefatigable diligence."[18]

I concur with Orme concerning Baxter's insatiable desire for learning. It is my personal hunch and observation that Baxter was consciously attempting to compensate for his lack of a formal university education by becoming so preoccupied and absorbed with learning. In a sense, he wanted to prove himself not only an equal, but to be superior, to those who were university trained. This possibly explains his compulsion for debates and theological controversies with those who held different theological postures. Thwarted in his attempt to attend the

[17] Ibid., I, 12.

[18] William Orme, The Life and Times of Richard Baxter (London: 1930), p. 9.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

university, plus being unable to make a good showing of himself in activities involving physical stamina, Baxter compensated for these deficiencies by excelling in scholarship and learning.

Books were the one luxury which he counted a necessity and indulged himself; they lined the walls of his study, covered the tables, overflowed to the floor. When reading Baxter's works, one can only marvel at the countless Scriptural references, his mastery of the theology of the Church Fathers, and the polemical writings of his day. His one regret was he did not have sufficient time to spend with his books, his first real love.

Writing in the Poetical Fragments during his later years, Baxter relates his thoughts concerning his youthful ambitions for academic degrees and learning,

> Thy methods cross'd my ways: my young desire
> To academic glory did aspire.
> Fain I'd have sat in such a nurse's lap,
> Where I might long have had a sluggard's nap;
> Or have been dandled on her reverend knees,
> And known by honoured titles and degrees;
> And There have spent the flower of my days
> In soaring in the air of human praise . . .
> But these were not thy thoughts; thou didst forsee
> That such a course would not be best for me,
> Thou mad'st me know that men's contempt and scorn
> Is such a cross as must be daily borne.
> My youthful pride and folly now I see,
> That grudged for want of titles and degree;
> That blushed with shame when this defect was known;
> and an inglorious name could hardly own . . .
> Although thou would'st not give me what I would,
> Thou gavest me the promis'd hundred-fold,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> O my dear God! how precious is thy love!
> Thy ways, not ours, lead to the joys above.[19]

During many of his early years, Baxter was greatly disturbed and troubled with doubts concerning his own salvation. He was apparently honest when dealing with his doubts. We labor under an illusion if we think that the great men of faith have been men who were free from the problems of doubt. Rather than rationalize away their doubts, they sought to work through them until they achieved a faith that was really their own--a faith that was vital and real. It must be said that the same is true of Baxter. He often spoke of his early apprehensions and fears, but he also speaks of his later willingness to face the issue until it was settled and he realized for himself the faith he sought. He said,

> Though formerly I was wont, when any such temptation came, to cast it aside, as fitter to be abhored than considered of, yet now this would not give me satisfaction; but, I was fain to dig to the very foundations, and seriously to examine the reasons of Christianity and to give a hearing to all that could be said against it, that so my faith might be indeed my own. And at last I found that . . . Nothing is so firmly believed as that which hath been sometimes doubted of. In the storm of this temptation I questioned awhile whether I were indeed a Christian or an infidel.[20]

Baxter admitted it was extremely difficult to live by faith, but the fact that he was willing to strive to live

[19] Ibid., p. 10.

[20] Baxter, Reliquiae, I, 20. Italics mine.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

by faith, even in spite of the doubts and difficulties, to a large measure accounts for his triumph of faith.

The impression one has of Baxter in his youth is that of an eager, sensitive, intelligent young man; loveable, and possibly very lonely. He relieved some of the anxieties relating to his loneliness by reading. Baxter admittedly had few friends while growing up as an only child. By contemporary standards which govern behavior, he would be described as being too old for his age, much too serious, one who is more at home with adults and the elderly than with his peers.

During his early years Baxter had learned to accept and come to grips with his poor health; he never quite recovered from the fact that he did not attend the university. Apart from these two major crises which occurred during his youth, the third most critical and influential struggle he mastered was that concerning a vocation. Literally years were expended gathering experiences and assurance that God was calling him to a place of service among the ordained clergy of the Church of England. Despite his feeling ill-equipped for such a giant task, Baxter does seek ecclesiastical ordination and thus begins to channel all of his energy and talents in a ministry which he hoped would see just one soul enter the Kingdom of God.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

His decision to enter the ministry as a primary vocation should be seen and viewed as the first major decision that Baxter was allowed to make for himself. Granted, he was encouraged and influenced by several persons and circumstances, but the decision was essentially his. Up to this point he had led an extremely sheltered existence; his decisions were made for him, if not by his parents, then by his schoolmasters. He did not have a say regarding his education, but we see Baxter expressing himself here for the first time. This was his choice, his decision, not that of his parents.

Therefore, we should be able to see in this vocational choice a decision to break with his family and family ties, a desire to be on his own. This is the background against which his coming to Dudley must be projected in order to discover what was really happening in the life of Baxter. When Baxter reported to Dudley in 1638 he was only twenty-three years old, and for the first time in his life he was now on his own, paying his own way, fully supporting himself through his own efforts. In every sense he is on his own and is experiencing personal freedom in its fullness. Also, he now possesses the option of freely determining just what kind of minister he will be, and how he will discharge his duties to God and the Church.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

This is what makes Dudley and Bridgnorth so vital in our understanding of Baxter. For it is during this time that young Richard brings it all together, where he fully integrates not only his personal life, but his vocational choice to be a servant of God. It is while ministering in these obscure places that the numerous problems relating to vocational decisions come to surface and take on new proportion and meaning.

His choice of ministry as a primary vocation should not be interpreted as desiring for himself an honorable profession, or simply as a means of adequate support and income, or an attempt to achieve for himself and his family social status--rather, ministry for Baxter was a life's commitment. The primary significance of Dudley and Bridgnorth is that they make Baxter seriously consider alternative forms and patterns of ministry as valid even though unacceptable to the leading clerics and divines of his day. Here he begins to affirm his personal self-understanding of the great and important issues which come to men in life.

He is no longer willing to accept token interpretations of the authorized church concerning those things most surely believed. He now begins to call them into question and subjugate them to the light of his own personal research and understanding. With his willing acceptance of Nonconformity came also a new understanding

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

of himself, his ministry, the church and its theology. Baxter's theology was drastically altered and shaped by his experiences at Dudley and Bridgnorth.

His unpopular choice of Nonconformity cannot help calling to mind the youth today who are seeking that which is unconventional, unacceptable, even unlawful. In every sense of the word Nonconformity became a cause which Baxter was compelled to identify with in the same manner in which our youth identify with popular radical movements. He was open to new ideas, new concepts, new and exciting issues which would not only serve to stimulate and give emphasis to his life, but which possibly could serve to reform the stated and fixed condition of the Church of England. Of his decision at Bridgnorth to embrace Nonconformity Baxter remarks: "The judgment now settled, I never could see cause to change, but the more I read of the Ancients, Church History, Counsels, etc., . . . the more was I confirmed in it to this day."[21]

Mentioned in Chapter IV was the fact that Baxter says while he was at Bridgnorth he experienced two threatening events. The second such threat is related here because it reflects how much Baxter matured during these days of youth and crisis. This second threat was also a

[21]Richard Baxter, A Treatise of Episcopacy (London: 1681), p. A.2. Italics mine.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

passage, that of the Earl of Bridgwater, Lord President of the Marches of Wales. Baxter says that upon his arrival in Bridgnorth one Saturday evening, one of the most malicious persons of the town went to the Earl, and told him that neither the pastor, Mr. Mastard, nor his assistant, Mr. Baxter, wore the surplice or made the sign of the cross in Baptism, nor prayed against the Scots.[22] The Earl informed the good citizen that he would inquire into the matter by personally attending church the following day. Baxter says that upon hearing this news Mastard fled the city and left the service to the reader, a Mr. Swain, and himself. When writing of this experience, Baxter was not so much threatened by the fact that his Nonconformist convictions would be discovered as he was of having to face the Earl by himself--Mr. Mastard having conspicuously absented himself. Though possibly wishing to follow the lead of the pastor, Baxter refused to do so and remained in Bridgnorth to preach the following day.

He was saved from the wrath of the Lord Protector in that on the Lord's Day the Earl changed his mind and instead of attending church in Bridgnorth decided to travel as far as Lichfield. Baxter concludes his remarks concerning this event by giving thanks to God that He had been so merciful to him in those troublesome times, and

[22]Baxter, Reliquiae, I, 17-18.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

allowed him to continue in his liberty of preaching the gospel to these people.

This incident further helps to illustrate the now settled character of young Baxter. It also reveals a mastery over the fear and anxiety which had been so evidenced in his experiences of earlier years. Such an action also coincides with our image and picture of Baxter, one which has been beautifully summed up in these words,

> Because he lived so constantly in that supernatural and immortal world, his was a soul that could neither be bribed nor intimidated. He had no respect of persons and was fearless before the face of man. He never blanched before the mightiest potentate on earth; only before God was he a 'dunghill worm.' He spoke with sterm detachment and dignity to Cromwell . . . In the same spirit he confronted Charles II.[23]

Such words accurately describe the Baxter we know who left Bridgnorth in 1640 to become pastor of the parish in Kidderminster. This is the man who became leader and spokesman for the cause of moderate Puritanism and Nonconformity in America as well as in England and the continent. Certainly this is a man come of age.

Richard Baxter remained a moderate Nonconformist throughout his life. He did not see fit to impose his beliefs on any person, nor did he view all human ceremonies as being unlawful or useless as is normally thought. Of

[23]Baxter, Autobiography, pp. xviii-xix.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the many ceremonies that the majority of Nonconformists rejected as being human and unlawful, Baxter found only one which he knew to be unlawful, and that was making the sign of the cross in baptism. Of the remaining ones he said, "I should have submitted to rather than hinder the Service or Peace of the Church."[24]

[24]Richard Baxter, Five Disputations of Church Government and Worship (London: 1659), p. 417.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Ames, William. Fresh Suit against Human Ceremonies in Worship. Rotterdam: 1633.

Baxter, Richard. An Apology for the Nonconformist Ministry. London: Printed for T. Parkhurst and D. Newman, 1681.

_____. Autobiography. J. M. Lloyd Thomas (ed.). (Everyman's Library) New York: Dutton, 1931.

_____. Five Disputations of Church Government and Worship. London: Simmons, 1659.

_____. Key for Catholicks. London: Simmons, 1659.

_____. Plain Scripture Proof of Infants Church-Membership and Baptism. London: Printed for Robert White, 1650.

_____. The Practical Works. William Orme (ed.). 23 Vols. London: Duncan, 1830.

_____. The Reformed Pastor. Hugh Martin (ed.). London: S.C.M. Press, 1956.

_____. Reliquiae Baxterianae. Matthew Sylvester (ed.). London: Printed for Parkhurst, 1696.

_____. A Treatise of Episcopacy. London: Simmons, 1681.

_____. A Treatise of Self-Denial. London: Simmons, 1660.

Carr, E. H. What Is History? New York: Knopf, 1961.

Davies, Horton. The English Free Churches. London: Oxford University Press, 1952.

Erikson, Erik H. "Ego Development and Historical Change," in The Psychoanalytical Study of the Child, II (1946), pp. 359-96.

_____. "Growth and Crisis in the 'Healthy Personality,'" in Murray and Kluckhorn (eds.), Personality in Nature, Culture and Society. New York: Knopf, 1953.

_____. "On the Nature of Psycho-Historical Evidence: In Search of Ghandi," Daedalus, XCVIII:3 (Summer 1968), 695-730.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Erikson, Erik H. "The Problem of Ego Identity," Journal, American Psychoanalytic Association, IV (January 1956), 56-121.

_____. Childhood and Society. New York: Norton, 1950.

_____. Ghandi's Truth. New York: Norton, 1969.

_____. Identity: Youth and Crisis. New York: Norton, 1968.

_____. Young Man Luther: A Study in Psychoanalysis and History. New York: Norton, 1958.

Freud, Anna. The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense. New York: Basic Books, 1952.

Garraty, John A. The Nature of Biography. New York: Knopf, 1955.

Gee, Henry, and William Hardy (eds.). Documents Illustrative of English Church History. New York: Kraus, 1966.

Hartman, Hans. "Comments on the Psychoanalytic Theory of the Ego," in Essays on Ego Psychology. New York: International Universities Press, 1964.

_____. Ego Psychology and the Problem of Adaptation. New York: International Universities Press, 1958.

Higham, Florence. Faith of Our Fathers. London: S.C.M. Press, 1939.

Hughes, H. Stuart. History as Art and as Science. New York: Harper & Row, 1964.

_____. "The Historian and the Social Scientist," American Historical Review, LXVI (October 1960), 20-46.

Kemp, Charles F. A Pastoral Triumph: The Story of Richard Baxter. New York: Harper & Row, 1948.

Langer, William L. "The Next Assignment," American Historical Review, LXIII (January 1958), 283-304.

Manuel, Frank E. "The Use and Abuse of Psychology in History," Daedalus, XCIX:3 (Summer 1970), 187-213.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Martin, Hugh. Puritanism and Richard Baxter. London: S.C.M. Press, 1954.

Matthews, A. G. "The Works of Richard Baxter: An Annotated List," Appendix in Geoffrey Nuttall, Richard Baxter. London: Nelson, 1965.

Mazlish, Bruce (ed.). Psychoanalysis and History. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1963.

Nuttall, Geoffrey F. Richard Baxter. London: Nelson, 1965.

_____. The Welsh Saints (1640-1660). Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1959.

Orme, William. The Life and Times of Richard Baxter. London, 1830.

Powicke, Frederick J. A Life of the Reverend Richard Baxter. London: Cape, 1924.

_____. Reverend Richard Baxter under the Cross. London: Cape, 1927.

Rapaport, David (ed.). Organization and Pathology of Thought. New York: Columbia University Press, 1941.

Schneider, Herbert Wallace. The Puritan Mind. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1958.

Schweitzer, Albert. The Psychiatric Study of Jesus. Charles R. Joy (tr.). Boston: Beacon Press, 1948.

Smith, Preserved. "Luther's Early Development in the Light of Psychoanalysis," American Journal of Psychology, XXIV (1913), 360-77.

Yankelovitch, Daniel, and William Barrett. Ego and Instinct. New York: Random House, 1970.

22 H 996
THEOLOGY LIBRARY
CLAREMONT, CALIF.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.